

City Shoe, Country Sandal: Somatic Geographies and Kinesthetic Translations among High-Altitude Quechua Athletes in the Peruvian Andes

by

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Dedication

To my parents.

Acknowledgements

Though I did not realize it then, I was on a path towards completing this dissertation from the moment I first set foot in Cusco thirteen years ago when I arrived to conduct interviews for my undergraduate thesis research as a student at the University of Chicago. It didn't take long for me to bump into graduate students from the University of Michigan taking Quechua classes at the Centro Tinku language academy, just a few blocks away from my apartment at the time. One of those students was Nick Emlen, in Cusco during the summer after his first year as a doctoral student in Ann Arbor. After we talked shop while walking the streets of the city center, Nick introduced me to my future advisor, Bruce Mannheim. Our first discussion was at *Cafe Extra*, a legendary coffee spot for Cusco locals. It was there that the idea of working in Cusco in some form as a graduate student took root in my mind, an idea that bloomed thereafter as I travelled across South America and later through Central America during my time as a Peace Corps volunteer. Six years after Nick introduced me to Bruce, I watched him defend his dissertation in the Titiev library at the University of Michigan during the spring of my first year as a student in the Anthropology program. One month later, I would return to Cusco as a student in the same language program Nick was completing when I met him. I thank him for helping me find my footing.

I didn't envision these circumstances for writing my dissertation or preparing for my defense, not when I saw Nick defend seven years ago, not when I returned to Ann Arbor from the field, not even when I closed the door to my office in West Hall for what would be the last

time in March 2020. Like everyone else at the time I hoped to return to the department before too long, but I never did, and was instead flung across the country like many others, seeking structuring routines for myself during unanticipated times.

This dissertation was truly conceived and assembled on the road, in one in-the-field moment followed by another, and it would not have been possible at all without generous support from the Fulbright-Hays Foundation, the International Institute and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, the Tinker Foundation, the Department of Education, and the Horace Rackham Graduate School. In addition, I'm grateful to my committee and close friends, with whom I convened regularly despite the circumstances of my final year and a half in the program to discuss my material as I prepared for my defense. I have many to thank:

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Preface



Figure 0-1: The 2019 Pan-American Games closing ceremony

The 2019 Pan-American Games culminate in thunderous applause. Heaving with spectators beneath the searing white light of exploding fireworks, the National Stadium in Lima is a crossroads for competitors from every corner of the hemisphere. Jumbotron screens suspended at opposite ends of the venue cue a video montage of sporting faces scrunched in anguish. Curated vignettes assembled from competitions over the preceding two weeks showcase the spirit of sport, eliciting clapping frenzies from fifty thousand onlookers, whose booming hoots punctuate the sold-out closing ceremony. Each roaring crescendo claims a win for country: a medal for

Mexico, another for Canada, another for Peru. Spectators across the planet plummet through television and computer screens streaming the event, hopscotching across space-borne satellites to witness the spectacle, far flung congregants of a transnational communion.

Two faces on the screens stand out from all the others for the intensity of their reception from the public. They are the faces of Gladys Tejeda and Christian Pacheco, both Peruvian athletes drenched in sweat and triumphant. The new Pan-American champions in the women's and men's marathons swept gold and set new Pan-American records in their respective events days prior, when they crossed the finish line in Lima's *Parque Kennedy* to jubilation from hundreds of thousands of fans. Their awesome exertion comes alive once more on suspended televisual walls in the stadium, causing a cathartic explosion of nationalist spirit below. Both of high-altitude provenance, Pacheco's and Tejeda's floating visages are national treasures, ensconced in a deafening wave of euphoric cheer that bubbles up, over, and out of the stadium onto the cityscape.



Figure 0-2: Pacheco, Tejeda, and Vizcarra at the medal ceremony, 2019

(Source: RPP 2018)

When at last the Peruvian delegation emerges from backstage to cross the stadium, Tejada herself bears the Peruvian flag to the middle. She glows in the orange light of the Pan-American flame, which dances off an iron-cast sun blazing atop a model replica of Machu Picchu's ritual stone, the *Intihuatana*. The audience unleashes and directs its energy onto her and the marching athletes, showering them in praise. As the ceremony draws to a close, the small Andean republic of Peru is the capital of the sporting world, at the vanguard of corporeal history. But as Tejada plants the national flag in the center of the stadium only days after the president of Peru bestowed gold medals upon her and Pacheco, two Quechua runners hailing from peripheral villages deep in the Andes Mountains, few think to ask an obvious question: *How have some of Latin America's most disenfranchised youth, whose communities were historically forced into the mountains and ruthlessly administered by colonialists and nationalist policy for centuries, become celebrated national champions at a competition of global significance?*

Flash backward five years to when the popular Latin American magazine *¡Hola!* published a special issue on Peruvian athletes after the South American Championships in January 2014 and this celebration would have seemed impossible. Notably absent among the smiling stars gracing the cover then was Tejada, as well as the Peruvian endurance runner Inés Melchor. Peru's hemispheric triumphs in endurance running trump all other sports successes in Peru. Yet although Tejada and Melchor had secured gold medals at South American championships that year and also represented Peru at the 2012 London Olympics just before, they "were omitted from the front page for being 'non-white,' 'non-urban,' and related with the peasant world of the highlands; meanwhile those depicted are notably urban, some of them with 'important' Limeño last names, but also sufficiently 'white' for the ideal of 'good image' as an exclusionary practice"¹ (Back and Zavala 2017, p. 383). Then, Tejada's and Melchor's were the

wrong kind of body, it appeared; unfit for the consuming public in 2014. Now, Peru had tripled its own record medal count at a Pan-American tournament in Lima (*Memoria Anual IPD 2019*), and Tejada's home-field triumph launched her into public consciousness as a hero.



Figure 0-3: "¡Hola!" magazine cover, January 2014 edition

(Source: ¡Hola! 2014)

How do we make sense of the transformation in public opinion, the jarring juxtaposition of marginal high-altitude youth alongside the embodiment of national power at sea level? Is the closing ceremony at the National Stadium the triumph of sport? The lifting up of underprivileged groups to the heights of competitive glory, a by-your-bootstraps narrative of grit,

dedication, and sheer force of will, of endeavoring underdogs rewarded with the spoils of victory and the admiration of a continent? Is it the unwavering work ethic of farmers surmounting the obstacles of a fast-urbanizing country that aspires to forms of modernity which have historically e(xc)luded them, empowered and prospering in emergent neoliberal sports infrastructures? Perhaps it is the gears of capitalism grinding Indigenous populations into commodities, tapping into and exploiting a pool of sports labor to churn out marketable televisual content for globally distributed consumer publics. Or, worse still, it is nationalist racialization that casts marginalized groups as innately destined for dazzling physical feats, a neo-Indigeneity condemned to the bounded, biological body.

Initiation into athletic training promises subaltern communities money and modern forms of global recognition, yet this gambit exacts a corporeal becoming not of their choosing and only partially under their control. *City Shoe Country Sandal* unravels the strands of the master tropes of sports competition, looking for the frayed edges of individual biographies, national and colonial histories, scientific experiments, and sports development protocols that do not line up in perfect correspondence. At stake is a struggle over the productive labor of a foot which pivots between lifeworlds, from vast mountain heights to dense coastal metropolis, from the rhythms of countryside labor to the metrics of nationalist athletic training, from barefoot commutes that zig zag up and over rolling hills to metal cleats that grip scabrous asphalt in endless ovals. This dissertation will follow the feet of Quechua athletes like Christian Pacheco and Gladys Tejada, focusing on mobility of many kinds, from one lifeworld of embodied action to another and within the hierarchy of Peruvian society.

¹ *“Gladys Tejeda e Inés Melchor, fueron omitidas de la portada por ser “no blancas”, “no urbanas”, y relacionadas con el mundo campesino de la sierra; mientras que los retratados son notablemente urbanos, algunos de ellos con “importantes” apellidos limeños, pero también lo suficientemente “blancos” para el ideal de “buena imagen” como práctica de exclusión.”*

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Preface.....	vi
List of Tables	xv
List of Figures	xvi
Abstract.....	xix
Chapter 1 : Introduction	1
1.1 Principal Intervention and Historical Context of Dissertation Fieldwork.....	1
1.2 Sports Infrastructures as Resource Extraction	8
1.3 Re-understanding Resource Extraction in Somatic Geographies	12
1.4 The Semiotic Labor of Kinesthetic Translation	20
1.5 Discussion of Methods and Transcription.....	27
1.6 Structure of the Dissertation and Chapters.....	30
1.7 Broader Impacts on Studies of Indigeneity and Latin American Migrations	32
Chapter 2 : Envisioning Potential	36
2.1 Introductory Vignette: Reflections on the Unconscious Acquisition of a Spirit of Sport...	36
2.2 The Language of Talent	39
2.3 The Legislative Emergence of ‘Athletic Talent’ in Peru	46
2.4 Bureaucratic Efforts to Recruit Undiscovered Talents	54
2.5 Communicative Deliberations of Athletic Talent	65

2.6 Somatic Geographies and the Distant Corners of New Migrations	71
2.7 Conclusion: Bringing Semiotic Anthropology to Bear on Embodied Ecology	79
Chapter 3 : Prospecting Potential.....	85
3.1 Introductory Vignette: A Recruitment Trial in the Countryside of Cusco.....	85
3.2 Sports Prospecting as Communicative Practice	87
3.3 Bureaucratizing the Competitive Gap Between Peru and Peer Nations	94
3.4 Switching Communicative Channels Between Recruitment Infrastructures	105
3.5 Making Contact Despite Obstructed Signals	112
3.6 Embodied (In)Experience Troubles Cueing.....	119
3.7 Conclusion: Unjamming Channels to Ensnare Potentials.....	130
Chapter 4 : Translating Potential	136
4.1 Introductory Vignette: A Technical Control in the Training Center.....	136
4.2 Wielding Language to Regulate Environments	140
4.3 Hypoxia as an Ideal Medium for Endurance Athletes	147
4.4 Local Conceptions of the Relation Between Language and Embodied Movement.....	155
4.5 The Poetics of Cueing in Pre-Competition Training Tests	161
4.6 Environmental Shocks Trouble Hypothesized Futures.....	174
4.7 Conclusion: Translating Potential Causes Eco-Temporal Anxieties	181
Chapter 5 : Corralling Talent	186
5.1 Introductory Vignette: A Blessing of the Athletes on Youth Day	186
5.2 Temporalizing Embodiment.....	189
5.3 Socio-attentional Pulls of Sports Migration to the Performance Center	196
5.4 Habit Rearing Inside the Total Institution	208
5.5 (Mis)Behavioral Ascriptions	215
5.6 Culturalist Ideologizations of Embodied Residues	222

5.7 Conclusion: Scaffolding National Success from the Individual	227
Chapter 6 : Cultivating Talent.....	234
6.1 Introductory Vignette: Receptivity to Instruction in a Conditioning Circuit	234
6.2 Embodiment as a Problem of Communicative Availability.....	237
6.3 Types of Somatic (Un)Availability	244
6.4 Dispositional Ascriptions of Impeded Progress to Indigenous Worldview	258
6.5 Reverse Ascriptions of Communicative Unavailability	269
6.6 Conclusion: Unreceptibility as Obstruction to Embodied Potential	278
Chapter 7 : Disciplining Talent.....	282
7.1 Introductory Vignette: A Victory Speech after Competition Success	282
7.2 Sports Embodiment as an Ethical Problem	285
7.3 Scaling Athletic Embodiment	291
7.4 Cultivating the Will to Weather Pain	301
7.5 Ethical Infraction as Affordance for Re-scaling the Indigenous Body	307
7.6 Sports as a Form of Embodied Precarity.....	316
7.7 Conclusion: Diagnosing Misbehavior to Resolve Communication Gaps.....	322
Chapter 8 : Conclusion.....	328
8.1 Introductory Vignette: The Closing of the 2019 Pan-American Games.....	328
8.2 A New Understanding of Indigenous Incorporation into the Nation	330
8.3 The Eco-Semiotic Labor of Kinesthetic Translation.....	334
8.4 The Curse of the Gift?.....	340
8.5 New Equivalence Makers and Their Future-Building Translations.....	346
8.6 The Body at its Limits	348
Bibliography	351

List of Tables

Table 2-1: Recursion of Performance Center geography	60
Table 2-2: Sports Institute technical knowledge distribution	61
Table 2-3: Sports Institute talent recruitment sectors	62
Table 2-4: Sports Institute linguistic markers of resource materiality.....	64
Table 2-5: Revalorization of object signs in reckoning athletic potential	76
Table 2-6: Socioeconomic factors in Anka’s athletic migration.	77
Table 3-1: Yearly medal count and total resident athlete population in Performance Centers ..	104
Table 4-1: Periodized training blocks of a full competition cycle.....	156
Table 4-2: Communicative activity throughout control.....	172
Table 6-1: Characterological types and attendant communication practices.....	276
Table 8-1: Total medal count by nation, Pan-American Games 2019.....	332

List of Figures

Figure 0-1: The 2019 Pan-American Games closing ceremony.....	vi
Figure 0-2: Pacheco, Tejeda, and Vizcarra at the medal ceremony, 2019.....	vii
Figure 0-3: "¡Hola!" magazine cover, January 2014 edition	ix
Figure 1-1: Peru wins the rights for the 2019 Pan-American Games	4
Figure 2-1: Morning training on the track in Cusco	36
Figure 2-2: Parade on National Day of Sport in Cusco	46
Figure 2-3: Anthropometric sports testing data	52
Figure 2-4: Three-tiered approach to talent incorporation.....	57
Figure 2-5: Provincial Elite Performance Centers	59
Figure 2-6: Metro Lima Performance Center	59
Figure 2-7: Pyramidal recruitment protocols.....	62
Figure 3-1: Preparations for a recruitment trial in the countryside.....	85
Figure 3-2: National coaches convene to assess talent in Cusco	94
Figure 3-3: Final team of 149 Peruvian athletes to the 2016 South American Games in Colombia	98
Figure 3-4: Total Medal Count of nations that secured at least one medal at the U20 Pan-Am track-and-field championship	100
Figure 3-5: Quantifiable emblems of national sports success relayed in yearly progress reports to general public.....	101
Figure 3-6: IPD criteria for classification as "Elite Qualified Athlete"	102
Figure 3-7: IPD criteria for classification as "Qualified Athlete".....	103
Figure 3-8: Sports Institute annual talent detection statistics	107

Figure 3-9: Entering the provinces of Cusco	112
Figure 3-10: School children complete recruitment trials in full uniforms	118
Figure 3-11: Organized warm-ups performed at Raymi school	125
Figure 3-12: Co-participatory boundary marking of the event.....	126
Figure 3-13: Communicative scaffolds for final sprint.....	127
Figure 3-14: Debriefing and collection of biographic information	130
Figure 4-1: Time keeping beside the track in Cusco	136
Figure 4-2: Coaches marking repetition times and other metrics in their training notebooks....	147
Figure 4-3: Pre-control technical warm-up and coordination drills.....	159
Figure 4-4: Momentary suspension of movement before the start whistle, innermost lanes reserved for control.....	162
Figure 4-5: Athletes progress through nearside straightaway towards the huddle of coaches ...	163
Figure 4-6: Athletes pass head coach and enter distal portions of the track.....	164
Figure 4-7: Coaches signal for lagging athletes to use competitors as pace makers on the far-side straightaway	165
Figure 4-8: Delivery of target metrics at the turn into the final laps	167
Figure 4-9: Crescendo of volume in the final sprint. Athletes fully externalize fatigue	169
Figure 4-10: The huddle re-congregates en route to the warm-up area.....	170
Figure 4-11: Post-control debrief and analysis of metrics	171
Figure 4-12: Cusco coaches assemble with coaches from across Peru at the national championship in Lima.....	174
Figure 5-1: Blessing ceremony in the Performance Center on Youth Day	186
Figure 5-2: Cross-country invitational at the Performance Center in Cusco.....	196
Figure 5-3: Resident athlete "rights" in the Performance Center	202
Figure 5-4: Athlete Support Program pay tiers.....	202
Figure 5-5: Architectural plan for athletic infrastructure in Cusco.....	206

Figure 5-6: Early morning scramble to the track from the dormitory wing	208
Figure 6-1: Athletes churn dirt in the long jump box for metabolic conditioning circuits	234
Figure 6-2: Athlete awaits feedback near finish line	244
Figure 6-3: Phawaq (center) immersed in conditioning circuit	249
Figure 6-4: Phawaq re-directs gaze and suspends movement, vocally responds to co-present athletes.	250
Figure 6-5: Idalberto re-orientes to address group. Phawaq resumes exercise, by-standers cease cross-play.	251
Figure 6-6: Coaching staff congregates at the lookout tower	258
Figure 6-7: Rumi returns to the start line.....	261
Figure 6-8: Rumi re-positions for take off.....	263
Figure 6-9: Rumi leaves for the near curve	264
Figure 6-10: Idalberto re-directs gaze to Tika	270
Figure 6-11: Idalberto approaches Tika.....	271
Figure 6-12: Tika freezes in place, Idalberto ceases cueing.	272
Figure 7-1: Athletes playing soccer during off hours at the Cusco center.....	282
Figure 7-2: National headquarters of Sports Institute, Lima	291
Figure 7-3: Athlete vignettes in promotional material.....	299
Figure 7-4: Pan-American Games 2019 slogans and advertisements are placed throughout Lima in the lead-up to the competition	299
Figure 7-5: Massage therapy on the track in Cusco.....	301
Figure 8-1: Opening ceremony at the 2019 Pan-American Games	328
Figure 8-2: Peru's total medal count at last four Pan-American Games	331

Abstract

Anthropologists have long examined the ways people wield technologies, institutions, and environments to shape and transform their bodies according to culturally specific notions of health and wellness. Yet half a century after Mauss argued that techniques of the body are assembled for the individual not by themselves alone but by all their education, we know little about how people communicatively harness their environments to assemble embodied actions. In this dissertation, I examine athletic recruitment and training among Indigenous endurance runners and their coaches in Cusco, Peru, and challenge contemporary notions of embodied potential by re-positioning the body as a semiotic entanglement that comes to life dialogically. I argue that we can only understand the manner in which humans learn to move through their environments by attending to the communicative acts that structure and scaffold their embodied learning. For both the Quechua youth and expatriate talent scouts in the Peruvian Institute of Sport with whom I work, the “gift” of athletic excellence is envisioned and cultivated with talk. In the Andes Mountains, Quechua communities revere the storied peregrinations of their barefoot ancestors, who once shuttled swiftly across the Inca Empire. Roaming talent scouts scouring these mountainous crevices now attribute this endurance to the thin air of high-altitude ecologies, which is purported to endow peripatetic inhabitants with aerobic excellence. Drawing on twenty-five months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted during a national recruitment campaign to mobilize competitors for Peru at the 2019 Pan-American Games, I track migrating Quechua athletes and circulating expatriate coaches as they navigate the transition from rural

Andean life rhythms to the vexing challenges of professional sports training. At the nexus of their training is the perceived need to overcome “cosmovision,” a fatalistic reticence stereotypically attributed to Indigenous Andean peoples. Quechua trainees are consequently tasked with training the entirety of their bodies, including the verbal skill of articulating their gift to themselves and others, as if their eloquence might incrementally catalyze a desire to triumph. 3,400 meters above sea level at the Elite Performance Center in Cusco, they willingly weather cascades of blistering shouts designed to “open” their bodies to the pains and passions of athletic self-transformation. My close attention to the communicative practices of coaching, talent scouting, and sports habitualization in a state-sponsored residential training facility shows how the body is voiced into being by a heterogeneous network of social actors vested in channeling its productive capacities. While anthropologists in the throes of a post-structural hangover have turned away from language towards materiality, my dissertation foregrounds the relation between language and the body to show how human-environment interactions are communicatively envisioned and cultivated. By positioning the Indigenous body specifically as the instrument and outcome of this cultivation, I reveal emergent modes of Indigenous citizenship, making original contributions to studies of embodiment, Indigeneity, and decoloniality.

Chapter 1 : Introduction

1.1 Principal Intervention and Historical Context of Dissertation Fieldwork

3,400 meters above sea level in Cusco, coaches at the Elite Performance Center scaffold the movements of Quechua endurance runners with cascades of blistering shouts that approximate the cadence and intensity of a military boot camp. Since 2008, Andean youth with little to no formal track-and-field experience have entered the center and transformed into national and continental junior endurance running champions, with top-contenders traveling to win medals at world-level competitions. The center is part of a network of athletic compounds the Peruvian Institute of Sport designed and constructed across the country to “potentialize the abilities and skills of prospective athletes in the practice of a determinate sports discipline, looking towards their eventual athletic development for elite competition”¹ (IPD, *Programa Presupuestal* 2018 p. 154). Of the 29 Peruvian athletes that competed at the 2016 Summer Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, seven trained in the infrastructure of Elite Performance Centers (*Radio Nacional*, April 1st, 2017).

In the Andes Mountains, Quechua communities revere the storied peregrinations of their barefoot ancestors, agile *chaski* messengers who shuttled swiftly across the breadth of the Inca Empire (D’Altroy 2015). Roaming talent scouts scouring these mountainous crevices now specifically recruit and train regional youth to compete in long-distance running contests, attributing their endurance to the thin air of high-altitude ecologies, which is purported to endow peripatetic inhabitants with aerobic excellence to excel in sports that require extreme stamina².

Familiar already with the relevance of high-altitude environments to endurance sports, the performance center in Cusco made sense to me when I stumbled upon it in 2015 while looking for a site to explore my budding linguistic anthropological interest in athletic training practices. The United States Olympic Training Center is located at high altitude in Colorado Springs, as are several performance centers in Africa, arguably the global epicenter of endurance running champions.

Graciously received by the administrative staff working in the center, I was quickly spending my afternoons with Quechua athletes and their expatriate coaches from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe. Sitting atop the lookout tower on the track and gazing upon the rising peaks that line Cusco's horizon, they would ask aloud to themselves and all those beside them: "*who else is over there?*" They seemed always to wonder if they might have a future world champion at their fingertips, a hidden prospect just out of their grasp in pockets still unexplored throughout the mountains that encompassed the compound. Upon arrival, I had mistakenly assumed the athletes in the center were from schools with access to training resources and technical expertise in Cusco's urban hub. Yet almost all the residents were recruited from small villages in Cusco's rural provinces and spent most of their childhood assisting their families with difficult agricultural labor while also commuting long distances to and from schools in the countryside. Four out of five recruits in the training centers across Peru are classified by the Ministry of Education as socio-economic level D and E, drawn from some of the poorest and more isolated regions of the country (*Radio Nacional*, April 1st, 2017; see also *Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática - Encuesta Nacional de Hogares* 2018).

What were these recruiters digging for deep in the Andean countryside? And what did the prospective Quechua champions in the center mean by explaining they had followed the "*allin*

ñan”, the “good path” to get there? Along with their coaches, they routinely invoked an injunction when discussing the trials of their training: “*we must continue forward*” (*hay que seguir adelante*). Yet the good path they pursued and the tracks of the infrastructure in which they moved seemed not to always correspond; the futures envisioned by coaches and their trainees routinely diverged. Towards which worlds were these paths positioned as opportunities or as escapes? Some prospective champions left abruptly. Others misbehaved and were made to leave. Attentional pulls seemed to come from all sides, and the longer I spent in and around the center, the more palpable the tension between athletes and their coaches became. Strategically situated at high altitude in Cusco, the center was a gateway to a large urban hub replete with opportunities for economic gain and educational advancement. Retaining Indigenous migrant athletes with one eye always on these new opportunities was, consequently, a constant struggle for administrators, and the pressure for a heterogeneous group of athletes and coaches to “continue forward” grew more urgent by the day while I conducted my work. In 2013, Peru won the bid to host the 2019 Pan-American Games, and from that moment forward Peru’s national sports bureaucracy was tasked with consolidating an athletic infrastructure capable of hosting forty-one countries from across the hemisphere while also orchestrating its strongest showing ever at the event.



Figure 1-1: Peru wins the rights for the 2019 Pan-American Games

(Source: Memoria Anual IPD 2013)

To be clear, Peru is no global sports powerhouse (certainly not yet). It has won only four Olympic medals on the world stage, and although more Peruvian athletes are qualifying for the Olympic Games today than in the past, there is still much to do before they threaten long-time contenders from Kenya and Ethiopia on the track in endurance running events, and even more to do before they challenge well-funded contenders from the Global North in team sports (if ever they can). For my interlocutors, there was therefore something odd about my coming to Peru of all places to study sport in the context of this impending mega-event. I was, they frequently

reminded me, from the United States, the sports superpower of the world, home to Michael Jordan, Serena Williams, Michael Phelps, Mia Hamm, Marion Jones, and countless other elite athletes who garner awe and adulation throughout Peru and across the globe. “*More than 300 million people!*”, coaches would exclaim to me when assessing the United States’ population. “*Peru has only thirty! That’s hardly ten percent!*”

Though I had set out to find athletes—any athletes—so I might be able to film them and thereafter analyze their communication, coaches quickly drew my attention to the much wider world within which their labor of crafting champions was distributed. Their quasi-obsession with celebrating the total population of the United States—as well as of China and Russia—while lamenting the smaller one in Peru, broadened my ethnographic horizons. Not simply coaches, or talent scouts assessing contenders, it began to feel as though they were *prospectors* tasked with assessing and managing human resources on a national scale, as if to maximize the citizenry’s human capital in a drive to hemispheric victory. As a trope, sports prospecting plays on the imagery of resource extraction, the identification and excavation of lucrative mineral and metal deposits, and across the wider sports world it is routine to speak of prospects as ‘diamonds in the rough,’ unrefined yet glimmering with potential for coaches willing to invest the time and effort. Was athletic recruitment in the Andes a twist on the familiar, a neo-imperialist reincarnation of Spanish-language extractivism? I began to wonder: neither flora, nor fauna, but Indigenous biologies themselves, now enticing bio-prospects in a sports “bio-economy of human biological materials” (Lock & Nguyen 2010; see also Ventura Santos 2002)?

Before I arrived in Cusco to lay the foundation for my dissertation fieldwork, the preparations for the 2019 Pan-American Games had already crept up into to the Andes. I was starting my research on the heels of a national recruitment campaign commissioned to assemble

more than 700 competitors for Peru. While the Peruvian government boasted its rights to host the vaunted international competition in Lima, and celebrated the concomitant economic and cultural benefits, it invested enormous financial and political capital to enlist Indigenous Quechuas and other marginalized communities across the country for sports training. “*The city must be readied with road infrastructure, sports infrastructure; but the most important thing is to prepare the athletes*”³ (Andina 2015), said then-president of the Peruvian Institute of Sport, Saul Barrera, when speaking of the capital city and the competitors that would travel to it for the competition. Celebrating a talent detection campaign attentive to Peruvian geographic diversity that targeted “bio-typological” aptitudes, sports bureaucrats aspired to cull as-of-yet undiscovered talent from “high and wide,” from across the distinct ecologies of Peru’s coasts, mountains, and jungles.

I had arrived at a cosmopolitan sports nexus at this unique moment in Peruvian sports history, when sea-level bureaucrats aspiring to new forms of modernity in the capital were deploying transnational purveyors of body cultivation from across Latin America and Western Europe to locate Indigenous youth from the mountainous heights of the Andes. Mine was a chance encounter with an entirely unexpected cohort of interlocutors, thrown together by chance, in circumstances not of their choosing and in an infrastructure not of their own design. Flummoxed in the face of this global assembly of experts and nascent athletes, I set out to understand how nations come to envision, extract, and cultivate perceived potentials when historic moments call for them. How do Quechua athletes, who train in sports compounds with coaches from across the globe, make sense of racializing ideologies insisting that their bodies are gifted? When plodding coaches and talent scouts from across the world scour the countryside of Cusco looking for talented youngsters to train in long-distance running events, what do they mean when they encourage them to leave behind their friends, families, and lifestyles to come to

the city and live in a residential athletic center that will “open doors” for them? How and to what effect do Quechua youth participate in the project of realizing their purported potential?

Ultimately, how do these Indigenous communities and the itinerant experts tasked with cultivating them imagine and pursue new futures vis-à-vis a nation not of their own making?

Looking for answers during pivotal times, I conducted twenty-five months of cumulative ethnographic research (2015 – 2019), in which I embedded myself within the Peruvian Institute of Sport precisely as it prepared to host, compete in, and post a record medal count at a globally heralded hemispheric competition. My project culminated at the 2019 Pan-American Games themselves, and as Quechua athletes like Gladys Tejada took to the stage, I watched them transform from marginalized outsiders into national heroes. My fieldwork built upon singular access to the material and social infrastructures that interface Peru with the global sports arena (Bale & Maguire 1994) to shed light on a historically distinct flows of sports labor migration, not just of Quechua youth down from highland Andean villages and into urban centers of political power, but of expatriate coaches *up* and *into* the mountains to find tomorrow’s stars.

This strange intermediation by mobile experts—of soon-to-be-discovered rural talent from historically marginalized populations with an endeavoring urban bureaucracy—seemed to break from typical accounts of neoliberal incorporation in the Andes (e.g., Goodale & Postero 2013; Postero 2007; Canessa 2005). Here, neither language nor land, neither governance nor rights seemed to figure in quite the same way. Here, it was the acquisition of sports movements at stake, a double incorporation: of learning athletic embodiment and of incorporating Indigenous populations into a burgeoning transnational sports infrastructure. This dissertation therefore tracks the transnational effects not only of Peru’s sports program but also of the nation’s legislative reforms as they recategorize Indigenous populations as the nation’s biological

patrimony. It explores the complex ways that athletic bodies are forged in the everyday trials of recruitment and training, paying attention to the manner and means by which somatic ideologies are reproduced and contested at diverse sites of athletic cultivation. The project brings dynamic interaction among athletes and their coaches into vivid focus as they hopscotch from tiny villages creviced in the mountains down to track-and-field championships in Peru's coastal capital, while learning to transform their bodies amidst discourses that demand an ideal athlete-citizen.

1.2 Sports Infrastructures as Resource Extraction

Sports occasion extreme behavior. Gladys Tejada and the youth in Cusco's Elite Performance Center push their bodies to physical and social limits in the quest to perfect movement. They aspire to best their own personal records in moments of maximal effort saturated with competitive spirit. Sports mega-events like Lima's 2019 Pan-American Games foment a collective effervescence that collapses biological bodies and body politics onto one another (Serazio 2013; Roche 2017). They can unite heterogeneous assemblies of fans through shared national belonging, leveling social differences and hierarchies into an "anti-structure" of "total, unmediated relationship between person and person" (Turner 1974 p.274). Yet these tightly regimented, "hypertrophic" (Silverstein 2004) invocations of nationalist ethos, ritually set off from the ordinary happenings of the day to day (Huizinga 2014 [1955]), do not simply fall from the sky ready-made for a pre-existing public to consume them. The spectacle, the spectators, the competitors, and their coaches and handlers all come alive in complex "global flows" (Appadurai 1990) of capital, scientific expertise, and embodied labor—often of athletes from the global south (Lanfranchi & Taylor 2001; Carter 2011)—which accrete and entangle in

infrastructures that materialize the nation (Foster 2002). Simply put, it takes maximum sociality to approach maximum performance.

Rule-governed sports spectacles in the 21st century specifically operate under the supervision of global athletic governing bodies, which are empowered to quantify and bureaucratically regulate the embodied actions that undergird their trans-historical “quest for records” (Guttman 2012 [1978] p.16 *et passim*). Though sports are based in rules, their rules are subject to change; many spectators prefer to see high-scoring action and high-impact competition, and so stakeholders have historically elected to modify sport for more exhilarating, more entertaining, and thereby more commodifiable gameplay (Sewart 1987). Critically, changes to rules and regulations reconfigure those in-game strategies most conducive to winning, and so reprioritize the kinds of athleticism considered most valuable to the sport in question. These historical shifts of game strategy provoke feedback loops of “technologized” training resources (Issanchou et al 2018) and new “enhancement technologies” (Miah 2006) of the body, which dovetail with normal increases in population-level biometrics brought on by secular trends to “drive high-level sport and organise performance around the specific constraints of each field position” (Sedeaud et al 2014 p.1146). From this confluence of forces results greater morphological specialization that raises the standards of elite competition (Norton & Olds 2001).

With the rise of global sports culture and the “event-driven” economies that profit from sports spectacles (Nauright 2004) has come a new “brawn drain” (Bale 1991) that displaces talents from peripheries to the metropole in the hunt for candidates who embody this exponentiating morphological and technological specialization. Sprawling athletic infrastructures have developed talent detection strategies in order to sift future stars from the masses, and the question of how to detect and recruit promising athletic talent now echoes resoundingly across

the globe. In Latin America, the question animates play, from Dominican baseball diamonds where scouts from the United States search for the league's next international imports (Kelly 2006; Klein 1993), to high-altitude human biology laboratories in the Andes where scientists test what makes a champion for endurance contests⁴ (Brutsaert & Parra 2006). These infrastructures funnel their "raw" talents first into programs designed to "farm" their athleticism (e.g., soccer talent academies, see Darby et al 2011), and thereafter onto the performative spectacles that fill arenas like Lima's National Stadium. Beyond the refinement process, champion athletes beckon onlookers to witness their corporeal end-products under bright lights, the finely tuned outcomes of the collaborations of coaches, nutritionists, doctors, psychologists, and many more.

The Peruvian state claims authority to cultivate its citizenry's "maximum physical and athletic potential" in the search for "sports talents" (see *Instituto Peruano del Deporte* 2015 p.5), deploying coaches to identify and cull "prospective athletes" from coastal, Amazonian, and Andean communities who "present sports training conditions and the biotype for national sport"⁵ (*Programa Presupuestal* 2018 p. 434). A technocratic assemblage of federation-sanctioned time keeping technologies for track-and-field competitions, electronic documents that track athlete biometrics, and trucks and gasoline tanks now flow across these ecologies, uncovering and delivering new talents from autochthonous populations dispersed across Peru's territories to an infrastructure of five Elite Performance Centers. Each refinery is a "total institution" (Goffman 1961), whose "various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution," (p.6), that is, dedicated sports training. Administrators in the Elite Performance Centers monitor everything from musculoskeletal growth to perceived fluctuations in psychological attitude.

Sports infrastructures like the network of Elite Performance Centers in Peru are “objects that create the grounds on which other objects operate” (Larkin 2013 p.329). They probe for embodied potentials distributed throughout national territories and draw them into disciplinary institutions designed to catalyze corporeal transformations; “the possibility of detection—detectability—animates this governmentality of citizenship across distinct modes of power” (Ghosh 2019 p.872). For the Sports Institute, athletic potentials are “eventual” and “prospective,” that is, they occupy an “epistemic space filled with unknowns” (Taussig et al 2013 p.S4). But how are their objects of analysis brought into being at all, sussed from nothing and rendered actionable social realities? How does the “potential” they pursue achieve a recognizable expression that materializes its own detection and recruitment? How does it blossom into a formal organization that entices those seeking to unlock and realize it, into an “object of epistemological longing” (Lempert 2019 p.26) that inspires sweeping bureaucratic action, new migratory flows, and coaches and athletes pursuing prestige and income on the world stage? Whereas prior research considers detectability, “the infinite and promissory search for the impostor within, as the engine that drives the state” (Ghosh 2019 p.872), here I shadow high-altitude talent scouts and budding athletes who do not seek to root out imposters or transgressors, but rather comb for and concentrate untapped potential for greatness.

If an infrastructure “cannot link a product to the market, then that product will spoil and become worthless” (Elyachar 2010 p.455), so clarifying the possibilities of athletic recruitment, or recruitability, and spotlighting the material pathways within which and across which bodies and their movements come alive to interpreters of various sorts, gives us a new window onto a politics of recruitment, onto how embodied potentialities are envisioned and acted upon by Indigenous communities pursuing access to institutional resources as well as by government

bureaucracies hoping to succeed on the global stage. Once secured, the 2019 Pan-American Games hosting rights seed a new space-time towards which a material infrastructure orients on a hunt for embodied gifts. And just as “supply chains make value from translating values produced in quite varied circumstances into capitalist inventory” (Tsing 2015 p. 64), this historic sports mobilization in Peru has entailed translating some of the most historically discriminated bodies in the nation into athletic resources. Because translation is a communicative process, not simply a change in the formal organization of matter, it requires intermediaries who are positioned to maneuver sequences of calibration. As I show, calibration may be foreign coaches arriving and learning to speak Spanish clearly enough for provincial ears, or Quechua recruits arriving to an urban center and learning to wear cleats for the first time.

1.3 Re-understanding Resource Extraction in Somatic Geographies

*“Ciudaspí sapatuyuq, canputa kutimuspa
usut’ayuq.”*

“With a shoe in the city, with a sandal returning to
the countryside.”

“En la ciudad pescamos con caña, en el campo con red.”

“In the city we fish with a rod, in the countryside with a
net.”

It was soon after arriving to the Performance Center that I overheard it. Anka, an athlete with whom I spent heaps of time during my fieldwork, would proffer his daily mantra in Quechua while removing cleats to don rubber sandals after training, a reminder of his origins and the shifting ground beneath his feet. Translated word for word, one might assume simple things: that Anka labors with sandals in the fields and with shoes on the track. Attention to suffixes reveals more: that one dons sandals upon *return* (verb stem *kuti-*, “to return”) to the countryside, thereby signifying circular movement that loops back to an origin from that origin’s point of view

(directional suffix *-mu*, denoting movement towards speaker and, typically, the speaker's home). This finer analytical grain reveals how the refrain succinctly diagrams Andean migratory circuits to the city, the domain of institutional access and professionalism, then *back* to the countryside, the domain of agrarian labor. Still richer meanings are to be inferred, for Anka's phrasing also culture-internally summarizes a social ideology of racial hybridity, or *mestizaje* (Stepan 1991; Young 1995; Cadena 2005; Wade 2010), where Indigeneity and whiteness are positioned on opposite ends of a partially negotiable spectrum. Never cast in fixed categories, bodies on this spectrum are rather "cultivated and transformed through material circumstances of dress, language, education, diet, and occupation" (Roberts 2012 p.2; see also Cadena 2000; Canessa 2012; Rappaport 2014), salient objects for reflective acts of self-modification.

Anka knew how to change habits of bodily comportment during his training, and had acquired the national lingua franca, Spanish, to enter the city. Yet curiously, Anka's coaches—who did not grow up in Cusco, or in Peru, or even in South America—had learned to speak bits of Quechua themselves. Not fluent, not even proficient, all the coaches in the center nevertheless knew a smattering of words. Some said the language sounded "innocent" and lamented that rural athletes came to speak less and less of it after arriving to the urban hub. Much more impressive than their limited Quechua repertoire, however, was their extensive knowledge of regional geography. They knew Indigenous communities by name and altitude, knew the hills and valleys that surrounded them, how each of their athletes had run over them daily as children commuting to and from school. They knew that rain in the wet season meant mud in the mountains, and therefore resistance for barefoot children mucking through it. They knew this approximated the training techniques they employed at the center, of hosing down the long jump box to wet the sand and thereby force athletes doing jump-sets to sink deeper, to work harder. They routinely

exclaimed on recruitment missions throughout the provinces that in the city one “fishes” (*pescar*) for scant talent with a “rod” (*caña*), while in the countryside, where the prospects teem, with a “net” (*red*).

What potential do scouts envision that compels them to journey over hills and through valleys, to endure dawn’s biting cold and midday’s stinging sunlight, to dodge hostile dogs that loiter between highland villages, all to test the physical fitness of Quechua prospects from deep in the Andes Mountains? For centuries, successive Peruvian governments attempted to systematically erase the linguistic and genetic material of Quechua peoples (Starn 1999; Leinaweaver 2005; Pieper Mooney 2010). Failure to properly acquire rudimentary Spanish prevents Quechua-speaking migrants from participating in local and national political parties and from securing jobs that provide livable wages. Political and economic discrimination against Quechua peoples is thickened with widely circulating discourses of inferiority that categorize them as uneducated and uncivilized (Cadena 2000; Mendéz 2011; Huayhua 2013). Yet despite the consequences of centuries of segregationist policy—including partial Spanish competence, bodily habits of years of agricultural work, daily rhythms of rural lifestyles, and problems with discipline and motivation—athletic programmers seek Quechua youth out to make them into champions. How was it that in the lead up to a modern sports spectacle like the Pan-American Games an Indigenous Quechua peasantry long considered “alien to modernity” (Franco 2006) by government institutions was suddenly the prize of expatriate coaches in a national bureaucracy with a transnational reach?

Read against each other, Anka’s refrain and his coaches’ recruitment catchphrase are parallel constructions, at least at first glance, each stipulating an urban and rural space in dynamic tension. But lineal translations are imperfect and incomplete: verbatim and suffix-level

correspondences without background knowledge obscure the social taxonomies and embodied politics of Andean political economy nestled in such phrasing (see Mannheim & Carreño 2014). Anka's and his coaches' sketches of Andean geography reveal more than two sets of behaviors relegated to city and countryside respectively. They point to "competing claims to modernity" (Lemon 2013), two entwined attempts to gain access to resources of various kinds: an athlete's attempt to enter the institutional space of the city, empower himself, and return the countryside, and his coaches' attempt to enter the talent-replete countryside, empower themselves, and return to the city. In other words, they counterpoise cross-cutting "corporal destinies", or "ideologies of success that are defined by resources imagined within the body itself, whether this be constituted genetically, spiritually, or as ancestral inheritance" (Guinness 2018 p316), each of which partially articulates with the other in socially interlocked practices of sports cultivation.

What is the fulcrum about which these claims wrangle? '*City shoe, country sandal*' and '*city rod, country net*' diagram political ecologies and their attendant embodiments: cleats on the city track of the performance center, and sandals over the mountains on commutes to and from countryside schools. In other words, both Anka and his coaches are attuned to what I call a **somatic geography**: routinized movement through underdeveloped rural education infrastructures and agrarian life rhythms in the Andes, a patterned human-environment interaction that comes to be revalorized as a cultivable embodied capacity by each party. In the age of globalized sports competition, hypoxia and the lifestyle characteristics of Quechua populations in the rural Andes become a momentary intersection of historical and evolutionary trajectories that crystallize into a perceived endurance potential that exceeds the "corporeal sufficiency" (Hogle 2005) of an everyday civilian. Athletes and coaches in and around the training center in Cusco envision potential as a heterogeneous assemblage of entangled processes

not reducible to any extractable body part, hormone, or Indigenous essence, nor separable from the environment in which it develops (c.f. “*hybrid collectif*” in De León⁶ 2015 p.40 and see Latour 1993 on “the hybrid”). Here, athletic talent cannot be “bracketed out” (Olson 2010) from its extreme environment, which includes hypoxia but also long commutes in Cusco’s underdeveloped rural infrastructure, genetic and developmental adaptations to high-altitude in Quechua populations, and labor-intensive agricultural lifestyles in the countryside.

To be sure, attempts to harness perceived relations between bodies and their environments are not new in the Andes, where colonists hunting for laborers described populations Indigenous to the region as better suited for metal extraction in silver mines at high altitude, but less disposed to labor in the hotter climates of lowland jungles (Busdiecker 2009). The Yungas region of what is today Bolivia, for example, was considered “a more suitable and natural place” for Black African slaves, as if it were a microcosm of the distal African environments from whence those colonial slaves were stolen, “reflecting perceptions of Africa’s environment as inhospitable and attitudes that blacks were at once more physically rugged and less human than others” (*ibid* p.109). Today, new ecological imaginaries drive institutional efforts to cultivate “the continual interactions of biological and social processes across time and space that sediment into local biologies” (Lock 2017 p.8) for sports mega-events specifically.

High-altitude Quechua populations continue to live in the Andes for historical reasons: segregation, indentured servitude, and ongoing discrimination. Their bodily capacity as it is conceived in human biological terms is itself socially and climactically conditioned, a “precipitated artifact” that is “readily detectable on the basis of biological and/or ethnographic investigation” and “often clustered in specific locations” (Lock 2017 p.8), ones especially attractive now to coaches and scouts in Cusco’s center. This “local biology” beckons ambitious

sports developers like a natural resource beckons prospectors, often concentrated in distant and difficult-to-access lands. Sports prospecting is speculative in that it envisions local biologies as “what might be,” as a “nature” that “is not past, present, or future, but conditional,” “a latent potential that remains dormant” (Hughes 2005 p.158). Insofar as Quechua populations are imagined as natural resources, they become so as “resource materialities,” that is, “as constitutive of and constituted within arrangements of substances, technologies, discourses, and the practices deployed by different kinds of actors” (Richardson & Weszkalnys 2014 p.16) who spatialize perceived human capacities, tethering them to landscapes and embodied practices while measuring them with techno-assemblages of time and record keeping devices.

As I sat beside talent scouts trucking these devices from one village to another in the mountains, I began to see how scouting missions in the highlands were like ethnographic fieldwork, how coaches’ and athletes’ knowledge making practices made clear that these “subjects of study have developed something like an ethnography of both their own predicaments and those who have encroached on them” (Holmes & Marcus 2006). Both Anka and his coaches regularly converged on shared terminology to describe the somatic geography of their interest: each commonly referred to “organic,” “natural,” and even “innate” athletic training when discussing the long-distance commuting and agrarian work of rural Quechua youth, a training they do “without knowing” (*sin saberlo*), they would say. Coaches and developing athletes in the Sports Institute are, in other words, “investigators in their own right” (Gal & Irvine 2019 p.21 *et passim*), for whom the countryside is a “site of ideological work”, “a focus of joint attention, for making construals and conjectures” (*ibid*) of the embodied capacities of rural Quechua youth, whether or not the youth—or their families—are attuned to or concerned with those things themselves. Each re-analyzes embodied forms and behaviors that have historically

been associated with discriminatory practices in the Andes—*e.g.*, barefootedness, agricultural labor, and distance from urban centers—as qualia translatable to professional sports endeavors (see also Hanks & Severi 2015 p.7-9 on ethnography as translation).

This “counter-valorization” (Agha 2007 p.154 *et passim*) of Quechua rurality in turn creates new conditions of possibility for socioeconomic mobility, beckoning Quechua athletes to pursue body cultivation as means for acquiring access to new institutional and social spaces, for migrating from one somatic geography—the rural countryside—to another—their urban sports training. This migration, I argue, entails *kinesthetic translation*: an attempt to port the life rhythms of agricultural work in the rural Andes to the disciplinary protocols of state-sponsored athletic training in the city by convening scientific expertise in knowledge making processes (see Latour 1999; Callon 1984). Both Anka’s mantra and his coaches refrain muster a positional approach to this translational process; each envisions and translates environments (Di Giminiani & Haines 2020) into historically situated embodied capacities vis-a-vis high-altitude ecologies, moving from the “text” of the countryside to that of the urban track. Like supply chains that seek to link up raw materials with points of refinement, the talent infrastructures that recruit subaltern Andean youth “translate value to the benefit of dominant firms; translation between noncapitalist and capitalist value systems is what they do,” (Tsing 2015 p.63; see also Satsuka 2015).

Peru’s successful bid to host the 2019 Games imbued old body politics with new embodied potentials, (re)prioritizing the kinds of citizens considered most valuable to the edification of a national (sporting) future. Quechua youth have been thrust into the spotlight of international competition for their ipso facto aerobic specialization, an embodied preparedness distributed in their environmental upbringing and their political economic circumstances in distal, high-altitude areas. This revalorization of Quechua youth and their contextual surround “indexes a gap

between what is and what might, could, or even should be” (Taussig et al 2013 p.55), inviting communicative practices to kinesthetically translate embodied potentials into profitable sports commodities. It figures the sports cultivation of Quechua youth as a bridge to success for Peru, a country that, according to the Sports Institute President, “*in the last few years has achieved a leadership in resistance running across Latin America,*” and forges ahead while “*settling into this leadership towards the future*”⁷ (IPD 2016).

The intersecting activities that make up Peruvian sports culture therefore orient and hearken to athletic talent as the salient social category through which to cultivate promising sports prospects: this is a culture of addressivity (Bakhtin 1981), within which individual bodies become focal points of social contestation while different groups vie to channel their perceived productive capacities towards sometimes competing ends. Following Cadena (2005), my ethnography of sports talent in the Andes thus provides “an analysis of conceptual politics,” to “reveal suppressed meanings and show the self-evident (i.e., the 'definition') in a different light, as it exposes the social relations through which it was established, de-naturalises it, and thus allows for legitimate re-signification” (Cadena 2005 p262). For if Indigenous athletes must purposefully learn to cultivate their athletic potential as a “sports commodity” (Scheper-Hughes & Wacquant 2003), one to be bought and sold in the global sports market, they do this by learning to (re)inhabit not just their own bodies but also communicative roles in participation frameworks that buttress their embodied re-materializations. This, I contend, is an irreducibly semiotic achievement, and in the vein of contemporary linguistic anthropological examinations of semiosis, this dissertation deploys a Peircian (1955; see also Parmentier 1994) semiotic to talk about positioned actors making their best sense of messy signification.

1.4 The Semiotic Labor of Kinesthetic Translation

“Cuando llegué acá el entrenamiento sí me chocó las primeras dos semanas. Tenía fatiga, me dolía todo. Y como no había llevado un entrenamiento dirigido, planificado anteriormente, llego acá y empiezo a mejorarme descomunadamente.”

“When I arrived here the training shocked me for the first two weeks. I was tired, everything hurt. And as I hadn’t conducted a planned, directed training before, I arrive here and begin to improve enormously.”

“Esos chicos no tienen ni una gota de coordinación. ¿Que tienen? Su capacidad aeróbica, quizás el talento para poder hacerlo, pero no conocen, no tienen ni lo mas mínimo conocimiento.”

“Those kids don’t have a single drop of coordination. What do they have? Their aerobic capacity, maybe the talent to be able to do it, but they don’t know, they don’t have the barest knowledge.”

Translational processes involve brokers who create equivalences and ferry materials across disparate social worlds, who act as ‘inter-’ mediaries, *e.g.*, of (registers of) language and culture (see Silverstein 1998; Mannheim 2015). Over the last decades, the material qualia of athletic talents have been painstakingly delimited by cadres of experts in athletic organizations like the Peruvian Institute of Sport, where many coaches have been formally educated through diplomatic exchanges in which they spend years learning standardized training methodologies abroad. Most are expatriate, and all share scientific understandings of physical education. They form a special subclass of (meta)*semiotic experts*, a cadre of world builders equipped to evaluate the pragmatics of talent and meet emergent and historically shifting demands, to identify and differentiate kernels of potential in a broader division of semiotic labor in sport (see Lemon 2018 p.153; *c.f.* Putnam 1975 p.227-228 on the division of linguistic labor). Through vernacular enactments of expertise (Carr 2010, Merry 2006, Flemmer 2018), they wield vocationally specific registers to describe qualities that are within their purview, “qualities by which they classify, categorize, and come to judge the good from the bad,” like talent “connoisseurs” (Silverstein 2013 p.348; see also Latour 2004 p.206 *et passim*). Operating a meta-semiotic framework that typifies the behaviors and movements of prospective athletes in the Andes, coaches and scouts “fix” indexical signs, that is, their labor “formulates and typifies them as

signs of such-and-such a type” (Nakassis 2016 p.332; see also Lempert 2019 on “indexicalization”), in this case the type of ‘talent’. Insofar as there can be “no materiality without semiosis” (Nakassis 2013 p.401), I argue there can be no recognition and re-materialization of physical potential into athletic talent without *semiotic labor*.

For coaches, the struggle to extract Quechua youth from their rural commutes and emplace them on the oval of the asphalt concerns the “citationality” (Nakassis 2013) of a body called upon to perform a potential that “keeps the same” (Gal 2015 p.226) across contexts. The trouble reveals itself in athletes’ and coaches’ distinctions between the “knowledge” and “coordination” of a “directed, planned” training program, and “capacity” and “talent” that flourishes “enormously” once catalyzed. Together they contend that youth from the countryside come to urban Cusco with an *ipso facto* preparation in an unruly environment that bestows upon them a unique, “organic” endurance. But by virtue of their “unknowing training”, this capacity proves surprisingly difficult to recontextualize within the paradigms of organized athletics. Potential, in the estimation of the coaches, stands in “inverse iconic” (Agha 2007 p.175) relation to the communicative scaffolding of its realization, that is, it is geographic inaccessibility that furnishes the potential of high-altitude provenance, but that geographic distance recapitulates itself as a communicative inaccessibility that stymies potential’s flourishing. The embodied “gifts” of a high-altitude upbringing, shorn from guided athletic socialization in physical education programs, are, for both coaches and their athletes, insufficient, and they require a systematic training program to intervene and transform the body with language.

Embodied transformation is brought to fruition in the complex entanglements of material precipitates, or “things made through activity, ‘artifacts’ of various kinds,” that “carry semiotic value or significance to those who perceive them” (Agha 2007 p.2-3). Material precipitates

include techno-assemblages of artifacts of varying degrees of perdurance, from the “vibrating columns of air” (*ibid* p.2-4) of coaching cues to the temporally calibrated stopwatches that click on internationally standardized asphalt tracks, to “graphic artifacts” (Hull 2012) like the papers and records books that crinkle and crease in the Sports Institute offices. Each makes possible the manifold relations between those involved in the hunt for athletic talents as “a kind of semiotic technology,” that is, a “material means for producing, interpreting, and regulating significance for particular ends” (p.27). Looking beyond the body as a “site” within which are “inscribed” all manner of habits (e.g., Wacquant 2004; see Sherouse 2016 for a call to move beyond “inscription” on the body), this dissertation contends that human bodies are *also* “material in movement, in flux, in variation” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Bodies are material-as-process, corporeal artifacts that act as pivot points for social negotiations between coaches and athletes. As artifacts, athletes *re-materialize* stronger, faster, and better in dense webs of social processes organized to produce the quantifiable metrics of embodied excellence valorized in the “rule-governed activities” (Besnier & Brownell 2019 p.1) of sport.

Bodies-in-motion require meta-semiotic laborers who stabilize their repetitions across broad temporal training programs (c.f. “words in motion” Tsing & Gluck 2009). Quechua youth do not simply realize they have certain material qualities to mobilize for emergent social purposes, as if those qualities pre-existed the hunt for them. Those material qualities emerge at the juncture of historical and social practices. They are constituted, imbued with significance, and mobilized for socio-historic ends in an “ecology of materials,” enrolled in “form-making processes” (Ingold 2012) that organize connections among seemingly disparate practices. The form-making processes of athletic training sessions do not only mobilize bodies for future success; they *transform* them to excel in institutionally sanctioned performance events. In the performance

center, training programs are longitudinally organized to orient long-term transformation towards the materially delineated embodied qualities that secure that future: they are ritual (re)materializations, or *recorporealizations* of training bodies. I therefore approach the athletic cultivation of Quechua athletes as a kinesthetic translation that “assembles” actions within a coherent, goal-oriented “project” or a “‘plan of action’ — that is, a course of action that at least one participant is pursuing, which may at first be opaque to others then retrospectively discernible, and then prospectively projectable” (Levinson 2013 p.122).

This translational process begins with the narrative and political envisioning of talent in the Sports Institute and among coaches and athletes themselves, who collectively delineate equivalences between countryside labor and urban training that beckon recruitment resources. For both athletes and coaches, rural life is a sports preparation which its practitioners “do without knowing”: Quechua youth with no history of formal training in the Andes navigate a “‘text’ they write without being able to read it,” (Certeau 1984 p. 93), that is, they unknowingly undergo a sports preparation before being recruited. This translational process reverberates in recruitment for coaches who scour the Andean countryside but face constant problems as they hopscotch from one village to another. Coaches “entextualize” (Bauman & Briggs 1990; Silverstein & Urban 1996) a ritual that puts bodies in motion in uniform, measurable ways, in order to create circumstances for the discerning of qualities: a simple recruitment test that aspires to infix order onto the countryside with a standardized distance and plain instructions. Yet the approach encounters immediate translational issues. The terrain of the countryside is uneven and littered with obstacles, so crafting a decontextualized space proves frustratingly difficult. And more difficult still is culling prized potential from rural youth who have little to no formal experience with track-and-field events, barely any “brush with competition” (*roce competitivo*). Unable to

heed pre-test instructions, they often underperform because they cannot discern the pacing needed to set impressive marks. These frustrations are compounded further by the ever-present possibility that the recruitment caravans might not reach all the schools in the region, or that the “phatic infrastructure” (Lemon 2018; Elyachar 2010) of local coaches with whom scouts in the Sports Institute maintain contact might not prepare the best prospects for them to evaluate upon arrival.

Translating the so-called “organic” training regimens of rural living into the standardized time blocks of the training center is thus hindered by “communication gaps” (Lemon 2013) of many kinds, both out of and inside the training center itself, leading to a stymieing mission creep. Though ascriptions of communicative breakdowns echo between coaches and their athletes throughout the recruitment and training process, revealing disjunctures in the translational chain, at the nexus of training in Cusco’s Performance Center is the perceived and urgent need to overcome the “kinesthetic residues” (Merleau Ponty 2012 p.110 *et passim*) of “cosmovision,” a fatalistic reticence stereotypically attributed to Indigenous Andeans. Deemed culturally predisposed to communicative unavailability, Quechua trainees are consequently tasked with training the entirety of their bodies, including the verbal skill of articulating their gift to themselves and others, as if their eloquence might incrementally catalyze a desire to triumph. In the heights of urban Cusco, they willingly weather waves of instructive cries designed to “open” their bodies to the pains and passions of athletic self-transformation. Newly arriving athletes encounter an array of biomedical and technical staff with whom they must translate kinesthetic experiences into words, through daily “somatic narratives” (Samudra 2008) that disentangle, through layers of communicative translation, their physical potential from its purportedly cultural lockbox. This complex assortment of conversational procedures shows how “power asymmetries

between different knowledge practices in contact are invariably involved in events of translation within such projects, as are differences of institutional authority” (Gal 2015 p.227).

Scholarly engagements with racialized embodiment in sport point to similar (post)colonial contexts in which administrators and coaches harness the “raw” talent (Guinness 2018 p. 321; see also Hokowhitu 2004) or “tame” the athletic “savagery” (Adams 2001; Brownell 2008) of Indigenous populations “naturally” disposed for sport⁸ but too disciplinarily “unruly” (Besnier 2012) for regimented training⁹. But these scholars have yet to examine how language is perceived to access and catalyze these racialized potentials. Coaches and sports medicine practitioners in Cusco must translate words into kinesthetic experiences through cueing and movement scaffolding on the one hand, interview and conversationally guided biomedical procedures on the other; they must make words into tightened muscle and steeled resolve, a “semiotic transduction” (Keane 2013) that melds language and body in feedback loops of word and action, as if the “gift” of athletic excellence could be cultivated with talk that taps “into the power that can be obtained by the very act of transforming something from one semiotic modality to another” (p.2; see also Silverstein 2003). This transduction of practices and energies, I argue, aspires to commensurate social worlds with talk: learning athletic embodiment is as much about learning to *speak* athleticism as it is to move.

Put differently, speaking athleticism *is* corporealizing it, a point I detail below in analyses of embodied response to cueing among nascent trainees, of addressivity and recipient design in training and recruitment procedures, and of victory speeches and life narratives of champion veterans that both retrospectively and prospectively figure embodied possibilities and inevitabilities. Each of these communication practices foregrounds language’s “material deployment in the labor process” (Park 2019 p.408), how both language and body *qua* material

are enlisted to shape each other. In my analysis, I diverge from studies positing that embodied experience precedes discourse (e.g., Desjarlais & Throop 2011), or is “transmitted without passing through language and consciousness” (Bourdieu 1991 p.51; see also Agha 2007 p.229). Accounts of athletic habituation inspired by this orientation to language and the body maintain that the role of training is “to appropriate through progressive impregnation a set of corporeal mechanisms and mental schemata” (Wacquant 2004: 17; see Downey 2010 p.25 *et passim* on linguistic scaffolds that accompany mimesis) largely through mimeticism and counter-mimeticism. Instead, I treat language as an indispensable resource through which actors solve problems of corporeal modification by scaffolding proprioceptive awareness with text-metrical, poetic structures (Agha 2007) that iconically diagram (Mannheim 1991) the rhythms and pacing of endurance running.

Apart from anthropological engagements with sporting sounds specifically (Powis & Carter 2018), curiously absent in the anthropology of sport is a developed account of the role of communicative practice in the bodily cultivation of athletic training. As a sign system, language can both reflectively and reflexively comment upon other sign behaviors (Lucy 1993), so to speak of reflexive signification is to speak of the layered constitution of objects and subjects, providing a methodological entry point to more thoroughly theorize sports infrastructures as communication systems (see Larkin 2013 p.334-336). The view here combats disciplinary attitudes that “language is a scalar supplement to social forms and to wordless behavior” (Mannheim 2018 p.114); here, body and word are both material, and they echo in meta-semiotic, reflexive typification through time, in speech chains and movement patterns that scaffold one another. Building upon contemporary linguistic anthropological work positing that “materiality is not “in” anything at all, even if we often experience it as such; rather, it is a relationship across

events of semiosis, a property of a whole social arrangement” (Nakassis 2013 p.403), my argument approaches embodiment as semiotic, intersubjective, interactive, and inescapably anchored in participation frameworks.

1.5 Discussion of Methods and Transcription

Gaining access to embodied gifts was not the only struggle I witnessed during my fieldwork. Gaining access to the training center itself, and to the various spaces within it, were my own challenges while relaying between the Sports Institute headquarters in Lima and the Performance Center in Cusco. Penetrating the many administrative layers of the Sports Institute to obtain the requisite permissions from the revolving door of bureaucrats in positions of authority meant registering myself as a member of the technical team in Cusco. As a team member I was viewed as a consultant of sorts, providing anthropological insights in the interest of group cohesion. The day I met the staff upon pitching the possibility of doing an ethnography in the training center they were listening attentively, smiling, eager to know more. *“When an athlete succeeds they are showered in the credit, but when one fails the blame is heaped on the coach!”* they exclaimed. All wanted me there, so I might set the record straight, I felt.

Consequently, the participation frameworks were such that athletes, already in a position of asymmetry with respect to their coaches and the biomedical team, were inclined to transpose the relation onto me, unless I made considerable efforts to overcome it. To that end, I trained alongside them, immersing myself in a running regimen both in order to develop a reflexive perspective on regimented conditioning to juxtapose against a semiotic account of the communicative mechanics of athletic instruction, and, more pragmatically, to converse with the athletes themselves. Having largely trained as an Olympic weightlifter before conducting my

research, the running I did on the track while in Cusco was always to my extreme discomfort, though I learned to recognize, albeit as an amateur, the peaks and valleys of pain in endurance training. At first the slow burn of running laps at high altitude was alien to me, entirely unlike the ballistic strength training characteristic of Olympic weightlifting, but with time I began to intuit distance by gauging my breathing and my fatigue (Allen-Collinson 2006). Because I both towered over the youth endurance runners and encompassed them in the width of my shoulders, I garnered the apt nickname “*el tanque Foster*” (“Foster the tank”) from the attending sports psychologist, who voiced the humor all found with my lumbering frame compared to the sleek and nimble runners in residence. I lumbered in another sense: for most of my fieldwork I carried cameras and audio recorders with me. Coaches and athletes in Cusco grew more comfortable with them over time, even assisting me on occasion with setting them up and filming. All photos and screen shots are my own unless otherwise noted.

Most, though not all, of the conversational material I analyze throughout the dissertation sees coaches as primary speakers, and athletes as addressees whose response is embodied and principally comes through modifications to technique and pacing. In my videographic materials, I attend closely to instructional cues, movement scaffolding, and the procedures by which athletes collaboratively learn to move in new ways. A corpus of video and audio recordings I collected while conducting fieldwork allows me to follow athletes from their recruitment in the countryside, to their training in the Elite Performance Center in Cusco, to their track-and-field competitions in Lima. Transcriptions of these recordings follow conversation analytic conventions (see Hepburn & Bolden 2013) with respect to layout, sequences of talk, and unfilled pauses. The onset of overlapping turns at talk is marked with a left square bracket ([). Latched turns at talk with no discernible pause between them are marked with equal signs (=). Gaps of

silence between turns at talk, when relevant, are represented as fractions of a second contained within parenthesis (.xx). All names pertaining to Cusco's rural geography are pseudonyms, as are all names of those in the center.

Athletes further come alive in first person accounts: life histories & interviews which I audio-recorded in Quechua and Spanish to explore how they narrate their transition from the familiar agricultural rhythms of rural Andean life to the vexing challenges of professional sports training in urban Cusco. As an ethnographer I do not treat these interviews as transparent and unbiased accounts of historical facts; as reported events they are ultimately "represented events" (Agha 2007 p.29), or "narrative self-constructions" (Wortham 2000) that prune and primp dialogic details according to whims and fancies contextually recoverable but not always conversationally obvious. The storytelling framework wherein athletes and I positioned ourselves to inhabit our respective roles as interviewees and interviewer were, of course, an interactional footing whereby we each narratively constructed ourselves vis-a-vis each other (Briggs 1986; Ochs & Capps 1996; see also Van Fleet 2008 for narrative in an Andean context). I was often grouped with other staff members given my age, appearance, and daily routines, a role recoverable from formal pronominal address, among other things, and which must be kept in mind. All talk sourced from interviews is represented in blocks set off from the main body text, or in italics with quotation marks. Shorter phrases are followed parenthetically by the original language source in the main body text, while the original language sources of longer sentences are moved to endnotes to maintain readability.

I triangulate my interviews with an archive of Sports Institute documentation, Peruvian and international sports law publications, television and radio interviews with sports bureaucrats, coaches, and athletes in the Elite Performance Center, as well as media publications detailing

IPD investments in infrastructure and preparations for the Pan-American games of 2019. The dissertation weaves these textual components together, foregrounding inter-textual resonances in an emergent whole that toggles between detailed analyses of face-to-face interactions and conversations and a more familiar practice of thick ethnographic description that interlaces history and narrative. This synthetic approach allows me to situate my richly textured ethnographic site within its complex historical and political contexts. Fascinated with how textualist scholars compose narratives that deftly blend poetic, emotive, and ethical dimensions in the fraught genre that is ethnography (Behar 1996; Maynard & Cahnmann-Taylor 2010), I narratively shuttle back and forth from urban competitions to countryside recruitment using vignettes culled from my ethnographic and videographic materials. From present to past to future, this descriptive tapestry sheds light on moments and spaces with fractal patterning to illuminate the blind spots of a local history, a counterpoint to the strictly empirical approach of social semiotics increasingly scrutinized by linguistic anthropologists troubled by stagnation in the field (see Keane 2005).

1.6 Structure of the Dissertation and Chapters

The chapters are arranged in a narrative arc, beginning in Lima, then ascending to the mountains on recruitments missions, descending once more to the Performance Center in Cusco, and finally again to sea-level for the culmination of the 2019 Pan-American Games. **Chapter one** attends to the political economy of the Peruvian Institute of Sport to make sense of the manners in which bureaucrats in the national headquarters and coaches and athletes on the ground in and around Cusco envision athletic talent. Focusing on scalar disjunctures between ritual centers of semiosis, I theorize *somatic geographies*, or routinized movements entangled in

politico-ecological processes. **Chapter two** examines how ‘talent’ is culled from these somatic geographies, first through the sports infrastructure of the Peruvian Ministry of Education, and next on recruitment expeditions to rural villages. Developing the concept of *nested phaticity*, I track how coaches cultivate an infrastructure of local instructors with whom they maintain contact to suss out new prospects in the countryside, and how attempts to draw their perceived bodily interiors to the surface encounter communicative trouble. **Chapter three** explores the ways language catalyzes the embodied learning of rural recruits upon arrival to the city track. I examine training regimens designed to kinesthetically translate their rural upbringing into urban prowess through what I call *eco-chronotopic calibration*, a translation of embodied performances across distinct ecologies and altitudes. **Chapter four** tracks how biomedical and coaching teams in Cusco create channels for corporeal modification focused on environmental adaptations, habits of hygiene, running technique, and discipline in a residential training center. Focusing on a so-called “trampoline effect,” I examine the ways athletes and coaches vie to channel perceived productive capacities, with coaches demanding adherence to training protocols and athletes eyeing educational and vocational opportunities in the city. **Chapter five** explores how coaches combat what they call Andean “cosmovision”, a raciosomatic ideology framing Quechua youth as predisposed to stubborn fatalism, defeatism, and communicative *unreceptibility*. **Chapter six** explores how an idiom of ethical self-cultivation frames the everyday behaviors and professional career arcs of Indigenous athletes after they migrate to Cusco to begin their sports careers, emplacing it within a natural disaster that provoked a crisis moment in the preparations for the 2019 Pan-American Games.

1.7 Broader Impacts on Studies of Indigeneity and Latin American Migrations

I arrived haphazardly to Cusco's Elite Performance Center looking for a site to continue my examination of the relation between language and the body in sports training, but I stumbled upon a sports universe far broader than what I went looking for. I found itinerant coaches from across the world conversing amongst themselves about medals, employed by a national(ist) sports bureaucracy to forge world champions out of adolescent flesh, lungs, and nervous systems. I found budding Quechua athletes hailing from small villages scattered throughout the rural provinces of the Andes, concentrated in a residential, state-sponsored facility and training to represent a country not of their own making. I found sports envoys from the U.S. Department of State running with them on the track and in the mountains surrounding Cusco, cultivating transnational sports diplomacy. And I found the scientifically informed, technocratic harnessing of high-altitude environments for sports requiring extreme stamina. In an instant, Cusco morphed from the dusty Andean city I knew before to a technocratic athletic nexus “of transnational wheeling and dealing by power brokers as well as athletes seeking to get the most reward for their hard work and talent” (Besnier & Brownell 2016 3rd paragraph), an arena wherein hopscotching experts and nascent Indigenous athletes wrangled en route to the podium of global sports cultures.

Obtaining the full rights of citizenship remains an on-going global struggle for Indigenous peoples. In Peru, the question of the political incorporation of Indigenous populations—what the Marxist intellectual Jose Mariátegui called the “problem of the Indian” (Mariátegui 2009 [1934])—has echoed for centuries. Yet scholarly engagements with citizenship in Latin America that characterize the incorporation of Indigenous communities into the nation-state as a matter of land redistribution (Postero 2007), language acquisition, and formal

education (García 2005; Horberger 1997; Hornberger & Coronel-Molina 2004) overlook the complex ways in which the body and its movements are finely enmeshed in nation-making processes. This may not be unexpected. Unlike in many other areas across the world where colonialists introduced organized sport to administer Indigenous populations, there is little colonial history of sport among Quechua populations in the Andes specifically. Before Spanish forces arrived in the new world, young men in the Inca Empire competed in races during *Warachikuy* competitions to prove their aptitude for military service (Ayala 2009; Salomon et al 1991). These “athletic” practices dissolved in the turmoil after contact, and despite scattered contemporary attempts to market the historical continuity of pre-colonial and contemporary sports forms in Peru (for example with surfing on the coasts of Lima in Hough-Snee 2015), organized sport in the Andes is relatively new. My research thus intervenes to reveal how Indigenous peoples secure income and recognition by participating in bureaucratic projects that endeavor to access their embodied “gifts,” pushing beyond postcolonial sequestrations of the Indigenous body. By tracking the double subalternity of Indigenous youth from national and geographical peripheries, I reveal migrant Indigenities that leverage sprawling bureaucracies to build new futures.

City Shoe, Country Sandal attends to the semiotic labor of athletic training in one more sense: that it is speculative. Investment in talent proceeds on the hunch that it will bear fruit in the future. Athletes are, therefore, investments: it is in the interest of the Sports Institute to protect those whose potential might bring medals. And the coaches are the athlete’s investments too, athletes who “imagine great things for themselves,” as many in Cusco claim. Both athletes and coaches focus on a value production that depends upon an aleotric outcome. In this vein, performances are valuable in many senses: they confer value on the athlete, upon the coach, and

upon the organization. They garner value in the form of compensation and benefits, with different tiers of earnings available depending on their success and the color of their medals. Athletes therefore negotiate their own commodification strategically by communicating their labor through embodied acts in dialogue with coaches.

Attending to the manners in which the communicative relations between coaches and their athletes are caught up broader political economic processes of value creation in the global sports arena is thus to attend to “the commoditization of semiosis” (Kockelman 2006 p.88) itself. As Quechua youth navigate the nationalist imaginaries that permeate their training, they learn to re-inhabit and narrativize their bodies in novel ways, often negotiating notions of ‘physical potential’ by using “strategic essentialisms”, processes whereby historically subjugated groups situationally appropriate and articulate discourses of natural aptitude to empower themselves politically and socially (Spivak 1987; see also McIntosh 2018). My dissertation therefore argues that Indigenous citizen-athletes and their gifts come to life dialogically (Tedlock & Mannheim 1995), voiced into being by a heterogeneous network of actors vested in channeling their productive capacities.

Finally, and in effect, an ethnographic account of this semiotic commodification of local biologies incidentally remedies contemporary perceptions of the “nonrelationship between medical anthropology and the anthropology of sport” (Besnier et al 2017 p.72) in two ways: first, by reorienting the former from a biomedical focus “on the treatment of sick bodies” to the latter’s engagement with “living and mostly healthy bodies” (*ibid*); second by bringing local biologies to bear on sports studies to explore “the dynamic in which bodies and capitalism mutually construct each other,” revealing how “commodification and corporatization shape

bodies that are valued,” and how such processes of valuation, in turn, shape commodification (Besnier & Brownell 2012 p.454).

¹ “*De potenciar las habilidades y destrezas de los deportistas de proyección en la práctica de una determinada disciplina deportiva, con miras a su eventual desarrollo deportivo de alta competencia.*”

² Human biological research on highland Andeans even posits an athletic edge for high-altitude natives of significant Indigenous ancestry who mature in continuous exposure to hypoxia, that is, the diminished oxygen at elevations above sea level (see Brutaset 2016; Kiyamu et al 2012).

³ “*Hay que alistar a la ciudad con infraestructura vial, infraestructura deportiva; pero lo más importante es preparar a los atletas.*”

⁴ Research in human biology continues to race to uncover the genetic and developmental underpinnings of athleticism, pinpointing the ACTN3 genotype and environmental stimuli like natal and early-childhood nutrition (Brutsaert & Parra 2006; Macarthur & North 2005; Rupert 2003; Tucker & Collins 2012; Yang et al 2003).

⁵ “*Aquellos deportistas que presentan condiciones de rendimiento deportivo y biotipo para el deporte nacional.*”

⁶ De Leon summons the *hybrid collectif* to theorize agency emergent in the relation between actants of diverse kinds, human and non-human. By funneling travelers into the extreme environments of border deserts, the United States’ Department of Homeland Security’s ‘Prevention Through Deterrence’ model of immigration control effectively unburdens the government of the responsibility of deaths during border crossings, instead ascribing the cause to starvation or hypothermia. For de Leon, the willful recruitment of inhospitable environments, filled with flora and fauna that make quick work of decomposing bodies, compels us widen our gaze “to include all of the components—human, animal, mineral, weather patterns, and so forth—that make up a hybrid system” (De Leon 2015 p.40).

⁷ “*Perú en los últimos años ha conseguido un liderazgo en el fondismo a nivel latinoamericano. Nos vamos asentando en este liderazgo hacia el futuro.*”

⁸ In endurance running specifically, accounts of predispositions to success come from (Lieberman et al 2020; Bale & Sang 1996).

⁹ The role of sport specifically in colonial and nation-making projects is extensive and well documented across the globe. It has been deployed to administer Indigenous populations dispossessed of their land, often as a mode of integrating local elites into administrative hierarchies in a subordinate position, for example in the club systems of British cricket (see for example James 1993 [1963] on cricket in the West Indies, and Appadurai 2015 for the case in India). Frontier boarding schools violently acculturated Native American communities into American football to usher them into “civilized” life through embodied “racial progress” (Adams 2001), while traveling sporting exhibitions at the World Fairs pitted “natives” against “civilized” peoples in rigged competitions of strength and endurance that purported to prove the superiority of “the Western race” over the rest of the “uncivilized” world (Brownell 2008).

Chapter 2 : Envisioning Potential

2.1 Introductory Vignette: Reflections on the Unconscious Acquisition of a Spirit of Sport



Figure 2-1: Morning training on the track in Cusco

The steps that lead up to the security gate of Cusco’s Elite Performance Center are smooth. Each has been weathered by the passage of feet, by successive generations of aspiring athletes who descended to and ascended from the track, day after day, sometimes for the entirety of their adolescence. With the pressure of countless paces, the red paint of each step’s tread has smeared into the bone grey concrete beneath, leaving pinkish divots that sink deeper every year. The sound a training sneaker’s rubber sole makes as it smooshes against the depressions is fleshy and muted. Anka sits in one the divots; his feet rest a few steps below, toes wiggling in thin air

through rubber sandal tops. He hunches over a cell phone, spine arched to position his head over the device's illuminated surface. Across it glimmer the visages of his favorite stars: Mo Farah and Kenenisa Bekele, Olympic and World long-distance running champions. "*El gran Farah,*" Anka mutters. He watches videos, fully immersed.

Always extra laps on the track for Anka. Always extra crunches and sprints. Always more drills on his own time, his warm-ups never rushed, his cleats wiped down after training in rain. In a sweatshirt and pants Anka looks skinny and unassuming, the fabric hangs loosely, tumbling in surplus. In a fitted running top and shorts that sit mid-quadriceps he transforms into fibrous potential, knotted muscle that ripples in sheets when flexed. Anka's frame carries little adipose, his body an icon for his daily life: unfettered, efficient, no extraneous weight to stymie movement. Seated on the steps, peering down onto the gardens after his morning workout, he tucks his knees to his chest and hugs his legs close. Ensnared in a white and red nylon wind breaker emblazoned in the logos of Peru's national sports bureaucracy, he indulges in sunlight that illuminates hills rising and receding into the distance on each side of Cusco's *Huatanay* valley.

Before Anka learned to proclaim that he pursues sport "in order to make his village stay high," (*llaqtayta altopi quedachinaypaq*), before his likeness began to appear on billboards and magazine covers, before he felled national records and rose through the ranks to be considered one of the best athletes ever to go up and down the steps here, he was a child who walked to school. As a student in one of Cusco's rural provinces, Anka would leave his home at seven in order to arrive to the small schoolhouse in the nearest urban hub by eight. Because there were no roads between his house and the school, he would run up and over a sea of rolling hills to arrive on time:

“Well, the process begins like this, no? You begin to run carrying a backpack in order to arrive on time. One responsibility was that you had to arrive at the exact hour, and as there is no transport, no one who gives you a ride to university, to your studies, to your high school, to the school, you are always acquiring, you know, all your spirit of sport. But nevertheless, in those years I didn’t know what sport is, you know? I mean, I didn’t have that emotion that I’m formed for sport.”¹

During his morning dashes to the closest school in the closest urban hub, from the countryside of what he calls a “forgotten province” (*provincia olvidada*) with no Internet access or any cell phones, there were no coaches, teammates, or programs to corral his movements. Anka had no explicit vision of organized athletics nor of his capacity for it, yet those barefoot commutes, saddled with a backpack over the long distances between Indigenous communities and the infrastructural posts of the Peruvian Ministry of Education, catalyzed a “spirit of sport” that continued to develop over the course of his career, as he came to “know” sport and “have the emotion” of feeling “formed” for it.

Now living in Cusco’s Performance Center, Anka’s willful dedication is daily demanded. Up the steps and just inside the security gate, plastered to the walls of the recreational commons over cases of glimmering trophies won in championships across the globe, hang enormous posters of faces scrunched in anguish, bodies frozen mid-stride pushing toward victory in vignettes that testify to the success of Peru’s Sports Institute. Emblazoned upon these snapshots of sporting tribulation are bright, bold letters: “Champion: 3000m With Obstacles,” says one. “National Cross-Country Champion,” another, body and word floating together on tapestries that transform movement into narrative, chapters of national success on the competition track of endurance running. Anka, a boy from deep in the mountains of Cusco, raised on embodied activities to which he attributes no reflective pursuit on the one hand yet for which he has been

swept into the purview of a purposeful nationalist athletics program on the other, does not commute anymore; the asphalt and his bedroom are only a stone's throw apart. How has Anka, living under the supervision of bureaucratic experts trained to catalyze embodied potential in a citizenry distributed across the country—a citizenry that may not necessarily, if at all, reflect upon that purported potential— come alive to his “spirit of sport,” and learned to articulate it to himself and to others?

2.2 The Language of Talent

Thousands of miles away from Anka, in the headquarters of the International Olympic Committee's World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in Montreal, Canada, the “spirit of sport” is, coincidentally, a matter of regulatory fact. Woven into WADA's mission statement is a parallel definition of the very same term, an “intrinsic value referred to as ‘the spirit of sport.’ It is the essence of Olympism, the pursuit of human excellence through the dedicated perfection of each person's natural talents” (WADA 2018 p.14). For international sports governing bodies like WADA, ranking elite sports performance and locating its origins summons attention not to unknowing acquisition but to human nature. Sports competitions animated by the spirit of sport thus purport to be spectacles of that nature unassisted—to the greatest extent possible—by the “artifice” of techno-culture (Roduit & Gaehwiler 2018). Sports organizations, like the International Association of Athletics Federation² (IAAF) to which Anka now pertains, materialize this ideology by “straightening out” (Bancel et al 2018 p. 589 *et passim*) “natural” differences of weight, age, and gender, and by standardizing “cultural” interventions with universal distance measurements, calibrated time keeping devices, and regulations on official footwear. Here, the “spirit of sport” entails reflective practice, and “natural talents” are the

substance formed, the latent potentials presumed to flourish when “dedicated” attention is paid to them.

Inviting us to pause and ponder, new anthropological engagements with potentiality muster attention to how,

“in Western biomedicine, emphasis is frequently placed on the idea that phenomena understood as part of nature—genes, cells, organs, bodies—contain ‘potential,’ a hidden force residing inside the gene, cell, etc., awaiting the right technological intervention in order to be realized. In such contexts researchers often seem to describe themselves as simply ‘discovering’ or ‘realizing’ a natural potential without recognizing the role of human action or choice” (Taussig, Hoeyer, & Helmreich 2013, S6-7).

In this vein, embodied potential—WADA’s “natural talent”—is presumed to inhere in the individual, like a natural resource hidden deep inside a mountain. In the realm of athletic contests, the notion has a long history. Tracing colonial and nationalist subjugation a world away in what is today New Zealand, Brendan Hokowhitu tracks the “masculine physicality” of Indigenous Māori men as an embodied constant passing through changing epochs. If, in the nineteenth century, it was “like the untamed countryside, something to be conquered and civilized,” by the twentieth it had become “something to be harnessed to provide manual labor for New Zealand’s developing colonial nation,” while in the twenty-first it has “become a spectacle played out by the overachievement of tāne (Māori men) on the sports field” (Hokowhitu 2004 p.259). In Hokowhitu’s estimation, across changing political and historical fields travels an embodied potential, a “physicality” stereotypically associated with and exemplified by Māori men³ that is harnessed for distinct political economic activities, labor *qua* resource. His account foregrounds historical permutations in the ways potentiality is ideologized, the reconfigured “epistemes” (Foucault 1970) in which bodies are pursued as objects of

knowledge. Yet the question of how a purportedly stable embodied potential comes to be envisioned and grappled with communicatively in everyday encounters remains. Is it the same potential at every historical juncture that is tugged out of laboring bodies? Have highland Quechua communities metamorphosed from marginalized outsiders into modern athletic prospects due to the historical discovery of their a-historical potential—like a “raw” commodity, a “natural value” beckoning extraction and refinement once its use values are comprehended (Tsing 2015)?

Charting a different analytical course, this chapter answers a call for anthropologists to “work reflexively with the concept of potentiality and the politics of its naming and framing” (Taussig, Hoeyer, & Helmreich 2013 S3) by exploring how a scientifically informed relation to ecology creates conditions for transnational migratory collisions and the potentialization of historically discriminated populations. Rather than assume that talent is an immanent quality of individuals, discovered by changing technological interventions that purport to measure realities previously immeasurable, I attend to its “material and ontological dispersion” (Richardson & Weszkalnys 2014 p.8) by focusing on how members of Peru’s state sports bureaucracy cite geographical and climatological features of the Andean landscape in their theorization of high-altitude running talent. While Tsing argues that “many capitalist raw materials (consider coal and oil) came into existence long before capitalism,” that capitalists “cannot produce human life, the prerequisite of labor” (Tsing 2015, p.62), here I argue that athletic talent, as a “raw” commodity, is hardly the natural deposition of ecological processes that predate capitalist or colonialist culture.

Itinerant sports talent scouts and Andean athletes from the provinces of Cusco come to collaboratively and retrospectively anchor athletic talent in an assemblage of entangled political

and ecological factors—what I label a **somatic geography**—that are inextricable from their social and historical surround. In attending to patterned and habitualized movements that obtain in the eco-material infrastructures of Andean social formations, my approach therefore “differs from conceiving of natural resources simply as culturally reworked nature,” which “would leave the domains of nature and culture and the human and the nonhuman conceptually intact” (Richardson & Weszkalnys 2014 p.8). Instead, I attend to temporalized landscapes that “emerge as condensations or crystallizations of activity within a relational field” (Ingold 2004 p.333), “taskscape” of habitual human actions collapsed into oft-travelled routes (Ingold 2002 p.198 *et passim*; see also Ingold & Vergunst 2008). In other words, human bodies and landscapes do not confront one another as autonomous entities but rather saturate each other as densely entangled habit architectures, as a habitus of “thinking movements” (Sheets-Johnstone 1999) distributed in space and time (Bourdieu 1977; see also Csordas 1990).

Mega-events like the Pan-American Games first mobilize neo-extractivist projects that canvass national territories for sports talents, momentarily re-envisioning human-environment relations as socio-historically emergent “affordances” (Gibson 1979), as cultivable objects for the global stage. Then, they induce new migratory flows that flush those purportedly latent potentialities out into the open, entangling them in webs of talent identification protocols. Of course, this is not the first time epistemological reconfigurations forced social reorganizations and racial spatialization (Méndez 2011) around supply chains in the Andes. The substance of gold, among other precious metals, came to be fundamentally revalorized from its ritually limited usage among the Inca with the arrival of Spanish conquistadores (Taussig 2010 [1980]) for whom the material was highly valuable. That revalorization, just as with a host of others across Latin America, incited an array of interconnected labor regimes that sequestered

Indigenous communities to land near valued material deposits. For hundreds of years in the highlands of the viceroyalty in Peru, hacienda masters geographically segregated Indigenous peoples into nucleated *reducciones* to exploit their labor for tribute and resource extraction (see Bakewell 2010 [1984]; Nash 1979; Orlove 1993), corralling them in the mountains or forcing them to open the veins of the earth (Galeano 1997), veins that tracked from those raw deposits to consuming publics at opposite ends in distant lands. Because of this labor assemblage Andean populations have remained in high-altitude geographies and, I contend, ultimately been retargeted *qua* “raw” deposit themselves, no longer the labor enlisted to extract but now the material extracted from the countryside.

Andean corporeal movements, spatially routinized for centuries, have become salient patterns for reflective action; they have congealed into reportable objects that beckon sports prospectors from afar. Treating ‘environment’ as a cross-disciplinary synonym for ‘context,’ one that houses a human interaction—an analog to text-in-context *i.e.* behavior-in-environment—I frame the Indigenous Andean body as one fragment among a broader network that contributes to a text-level indexicality (Agha 2007 p.24 et passim), a complex human-environment interaction reported in the form of a metapragmatic stereotype (*ibid* p.154, see also Agha 1998), which “fixes” variability into a static type. In the case of endurance running, preconceptions regarding the patterned movements of populations purportedly (pre)disposed to endurance running crop up across the globe: in the work of John Bale and Joe Sang, for example, for whom ascriptions of Kenyan success in endurance races to their childhood commutes reflect an environmental determinism (Bale & Sang 1996) that reduces athletic performance to unsubstantiated claims of race-based biology. So too do notions of climactic potential reverberate in popular discussions of *Tarahumara* super-endurance in Mexico (e.g., McDougal 2009; see Lieberman et al 2020 for an

ethnographic and archaeological rebuttal). Yet whether there are scientifically measurable changes to sports performance that result from the embodied habits of rural lifestyles, their *perceived* efficacies are themselves social facts, stereotypes that mediate “between two pragmatic orders: the pragmatic phenomena that they construe, and the pragmatic phenomena that they enable,” (Agha 1998, p.151-2), thereby motivating political action and provoking tangible changes in the everyday lives of Indigenous athletes.

Below, I focus on two communicative agglomerates, each “an overall structure of tiered nodes in a network of sites of practice, generative centers of semiosis and paths to their peripheries” (Silverstein 2013, p.362 *et passim*) to trace the historical emergence of ‘athletic talent’ as a discursive and legislative object, the discursive and dialogical echoes (Bakhtin 1981) that buttress its constitution as a discernible entity imagined to be distributed in a national territory. Attending to fractionally congruent theorizations of Quechua youth as a natural resource about which nation states mobilize—on the one hand in the language of biophysical talent as articulated by sports bureaucrats in the Peruvian Institute of Sport’s headquarters in Lima, on the other hand in on-the-ground assessments by regional Quechua youth athletes and their expatriate coaches in the Andes—I track how “in or through such emergent structures, semiotic value via genres of textuality, ever of the moment, flows and intersects that coming from other generative centers, such that complex cultural forms as experienced are inevitably multiply determined from several such centers of emanation” (*ibid*).

That metapragmatic stereotypes fixing the relation between human populations and their environments can be consciously grasped “makes them culturally pre-eminent in certain ways: they become reportable, discussable, open to dispute; they can be invoked as social standards, or institutionalized as such” (Agha 1998, p.151-2). To find the points of articulation where

institutionalized stereotypes and on-the-ground talent assessments meet, I begin by mapping a dense network of official biometrics, institutional speech, and technological innovations, all with the explicit goal of building an athletic future for the nation and which emanate from the Peruvian Institute of Sport's national head quarters. Tracking the threads of this web, we find that to speak of a 'sports talent' is "to refer to kinds as opposed to individuals" (Mannheim et al 2010), that is, as 'talent' circulates through the various communicative arenas of this generative center, we find it typifying the various geographies of the nation as a-historical resources awaiting their own discovery, and therefore recruitable so long as the requisite resources are deployed to uncover them. The 'language of talent,' I argue, stands to naturalize political realities that build upon centuries of marginalization without explicitly summoning them to mind. This commoditization of athletic bodies, a form of heritage population prospecting (Hall 2019), recapitulates resource materialities, naturalizing purportedly 'raw' deposits while legitimating their refinement in a new "politics of recognition" (Taylor 1994) with a biophysical twist.

From state-sponsored talent identification protocols I turn next to the narrative and conversational practices of athletes and coaches in Cusco's Elite Performance Center itself, all of whom re-contextualize the childhood commutes and agricultural work of rural Quechua children as track-and-field base training. In regimented stance-taking (DuBois 2007), coaches and athletes communicatively disentangle characterological attributes regarding embodied behaviors and conducts (Lempert 2009), framing highland children as ideal endurance running candidates. Insofar as stereotypes may cast people or communities as more or less (in)capable of particular actions, they "allow (and sometimes require) conscious strategies of self-presentation; they serve as models for some individuals, counter-models for others" (Agha 1998, p.151-2). Here, I

contend that the language of talent is doubly naturalizing: Indigenous athletes learn “strategic essentialisms” (Spivak 1989; see also McIntosh 2019) with which they come to articulate a discourse of natural aptitude for social, political, and economic gain. Drawing from ethnographic data, life-histories, and interviews I track how “innate practice” is retrospectively read into the developmental life-course of highland children who “train” for endurance running in anything but a deliberate fashion. I argue that this narrative retrospection reproduces longstanding stereotypical images of rural Andean communities in a new valence of biophysical potential (see Hokowhitu 2003 for a cross-cultural comparison), one emblematic of new developmental discourses of empowerment that circulate in global sports cultures.

2.3 The Legislative Emergence of ‘Athletic Talent’ in Peru



Figure 2-2: Parade on National Day of Sport in Cusco

Cusco’s *plaza de armas* surges. A sea of bodies dons suits and ties, blazers and skirts, high heels and leather shoes. It is June 12th, 2017, the 36th anniversary of the Peruvian Institute of

Sport. Mingling under midday sunlight that stings exposed flesh are coaches, bureaucrats, school teams, sports clubs, university athletes, neighborhood sports leagues, governing members of the local chapters of all of Peru's athletic federations, all the members of Cusco's sports community. The plaza bubbles with the chatter of eager marchers anticipating a parade that has already been delayed an hour. Seated on a scaffolded pavilion high above the worn stones of the cathedral steps are the mayor of Cusco, the president of the Regional Council of Sport, a pair of military officials, and an attending cadre of bureaucrats, chatting amongst themselves and looking down onto the marchers from under the shade of a canopy that flutters in the wind. Flanking the scaffolding and lining the parade route are thousands of spectators, the foremost row of whom stand flush with metal barricades lining the street. The mass of idling onlookers stretches back from the barricades. Hands rest against foreheads, shielding eyes from the glare of hot sun on worn stone. Some stand on tiptoes for a better view.

Finally, the signal comes. Organizers hustle to alert the marchers in a line of sports entities that trails out of the plaza and down *Avenida del Sol*. Over loudspeakers comes the celebratory voice of the announcer: "*Announcing the Peruvian Institute of Sport!*"

"*Stretch it!*" shouts Tomas, the technical director of Cusco's training center.

At the head of the parade, ushering in the snaking column of marchers behind them, is Anka, one of six athletes representing the Performance Center. He and three others hold the corners of a drooping Peruvian flag, while two bring up the rear with professional dancers at their sides. At their technical director's behest, they stretch the flag taut. Left. Right. Left. Right. Extended legs reach forward in lockstep, rigid arms sway beside upright torsos, the orderly march of citizens. The Sports Institute caravan begins its passage before watchful eyes atop the pavilion, the march in synch with the narration of the announcer, whose amplified exclamations reverberate

throughout the plaza: *“here comes the sporting family led in the first place by elite level athletes, who are developed directly in the Elite Performance and Training Center, who obtain medals at the national and international level!”*⁴

In lock step the athletes go marching past the pavilion, adolescents transformed into ambassadors for the nation, emissaries sent to secure shimmering medallions at international competitions. Covered toes point skyward under leather shoes that rise and fall one after the other, legs like stilts on the move. Wooden heels clap against the cobblestone road in unison. Meanwhile, hundreds of miles away, before an audience assembled at the national stadium in Lima, the president of the Peruvian Institute of Sport shares in the day’s celebration, intertextually invoking the bureaucracy’s mission as he indexically forges a triumphant future for the country and its marchers, on the coast, in the mountains, and everywhere in between:

*“I want to salute all the workers of the IPD. Some have already left a very important legacy for the institution, and they remain to this day, and now in the new times within which the IPD lives is the issue of the Pan-American Games, the issue of the Bolivarian and South American Games. I believe that the long-awaited growth we aspire to in our country is already taking shape in various disciplines.”*⁵

What past does he champion? What future does he herald? *Who* will usher it in?



To build a successful future in international athletic competitions Peru must constitute sporting subjects who can secure medals and garner acclaim on the field of play, marchers like the athletes in Cusco who embody “the long-awaited growth” the nation aspires to, in the words of the Sports Institute’s president. Yet long before the Sports Institute took its current form,

Peruvians were already debating the importance of sport in national life. Until Peru's military dictatorship in 1968, the governmental administration of sport recapitulated Peruvian social hierarchy in two fundamental ways. First, by organizing a nascent "professional" system of athletics according to the logics of the *hacienda* system, that is, through clubs associated with domineering patrons or "*padrinos*" (Panfichi et al 2020). Second, by nesting sport within a broader "civilizing project" of racial hygiene (Muñoz Cabrejo 2001) that promised the "right" to free education through the rapidly expanding public education system. At the turn of the twentieth century, Mestizo and Indian populations "identified as essentially Peruvian but also as retrograde rural dwellers" (de la Cadena 2001 p. 271), confronted education projects "intended to civilise the countryside and improve their lives by incorporating them into the national community" (*ibid*). Organized physical education was part and parcel of the expanding programs of the Ministry of Education, and corporeal activity quite literally undergirded national incorporation.

Peru's modern sports program emerged out of the interventions of military dictator Juan Velasco Alvarado, who sought to wrest sport from the control of club patrons much the same way he sought to wrest land from *hacendados* and redistribute it to the country's disenfranchised peasantry. In both ambits, the dictatorship "sought to liquidate the power basis of the Peruvian oligarchy, a limited cohort of families tethered by lineage and friendship that had control of principal economic activities"⁶ (Vila Benites and Panfichi 2020 p.75). Sport was a parallel arena within which to scaffold nationalist sentiment through shared, popular practices. In contradistinction to much of Latin America, where sport served the purpose of militaristic propaganda, in Peru it heralded a "revolution from above," wherein a "populist military government sought to foment popular participation, but at the same time required centralized

control in the process”⁷ (*ibid*, p.76; see also Palmer 1973). Legislators began writing the importance of sport into national law, celebrating the capacity for recreational activity to improve citizen wellbeing. Only three months after passing the ‘Law of Agrarian Reform’⁸ (Law N17716) came the first explicit formulation of national sport in Peru in 1969, when the ‘Organic Law of National Sport’⁹ attuned to public health by stipulating the principal benefits of organized physical education, including the “betterment and development of the physical, psychic, and biological standard of the population”¹⁰ (Law N17817, Chapter 1, Article 3d).

The Sports Institute began to take its current form after an executive order in 1974 (Law N20555, article 14 *et passim*), and physical activity cemented itself in Peruvian law over the second half of the 20th century, reflecting similar trends in international law. In 2003 came the UN General Assembly’s adoption of “sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace” (Resolution 58/5, UN 2003), and by 2004, the ‘Law of the Promotion and Development of Sport’¹¹ in Peru decreed that “the general practice of sport constitutes a human right” and that the Sports Institute is thus responsible for developing and executing a sports curriculum that cultivates this human right “without discrimination based in origin, race, sex, language, religion, opinion, economic condition, or in any other sort” (Law N29544, Article 1). Having synched national sport with international sports culture, Peruvian bureaucrats went about looking for new champions.

While it had largely invested resources in developing physical activity as a national and human right, the IPD began to shift its focus at the turn of the century. For years, competitive athletes in Peru’s nascent sports infrastructure were obtaining grants to study abroad, largely in Cuba, a county with which Peru has sustained exchange agreements for decades to facilitate the training of sports coaches.¹² Inspired over the latter half of the 20th century by the small island’s

global presence on the world sporting stage—due in large part to a history of athletic collaboration between Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Germany (see Yoder 2016)—newly capacitated Peruvian methodologists (*metodólogos*) returned to Peru eager to reproduce the success of the Cuban model. At the same time, the Sports Institute began inviting Cubans to come to various Peruvian cities to port their system of sports knowledge.

So began a seismic shift, from a focus on public health to a targeted plan to develop what bureaucrats working at the time called the “technical athletic force of the nation” (*fuerza técnica nacional deportiva*):

“All the programs were focused, the majority, on expansion and sports promotion, that is to say base sport: to foment movement, physical activity, etcetera...But they also had to potentialize and fortify programs that foment elite training, that offer a service for the elite training athlete, and that was only in Lima”¹³ (IPD bureaucrat on elite training).

The most concerted effort to “potentialize” elite training outside of the capital city came in the mid-2000s, when the IPD sent a research team on reconnaissance missions to assess Peru’s sports assets by specifying all the components that would make an integrated national sports system. This included tallying infrastructure—like stadiums and sports fields—and enumerating human resources: trained coaches with degrees in sports science and international education, as well as competitive athletes with national and international competition experience. Sports Institute researchers also conducted extensive anthropometric and performance testing with adolescent populations specifically “in such a manner that permits scientifically formulating detection criteria for athletic talents,”¹⁴ as they came to be presented upon publication in the Sports Institute’s “Peru Measures Itself¹⁵” (*El Perú Se Mide* 2014, p.1).

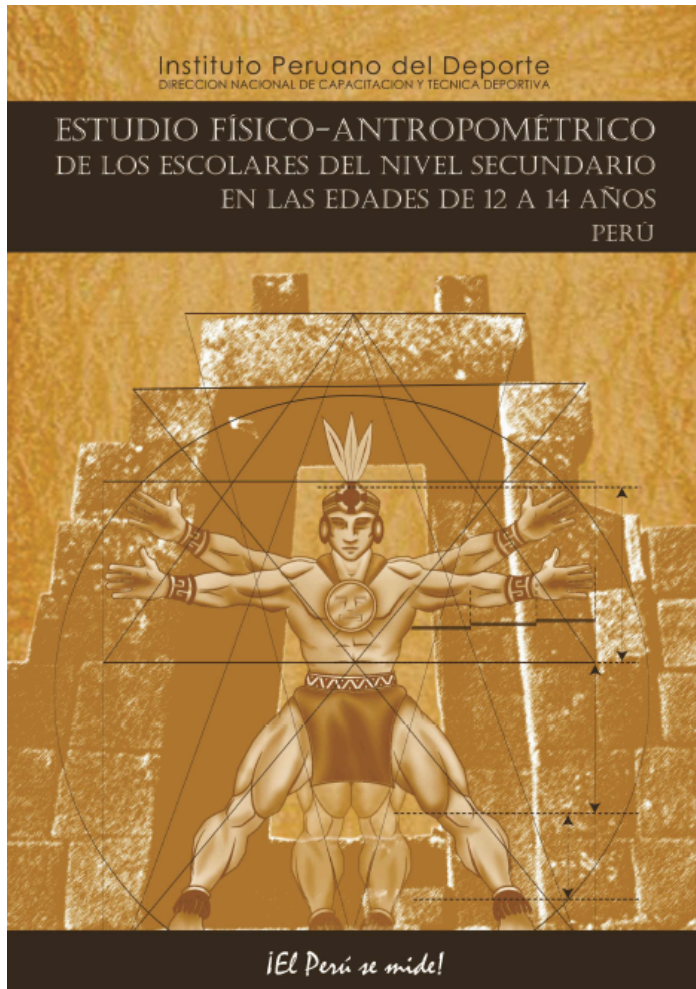


Figure 2-3: Anthropometric sports testing data

(Source: “El Perú Se Mide”, IPD 2014)

The integration of high-altitude ecologies into the national sports infrastructure came at a moment in which bureaucrats in the Sports Institute began focusing more intently on decentralizing athletic training in Lima. The obvious fact, according to former methodologists in the office, was that sea-level Lima, long the political head quarters of the nation, was simply insufficient for a full array of sports:

“So what would we do with the athletes whose sports needed high altitude to develop, and couldn’t do it in Lima where we are at sea-level. What happened with them? They

*were unattended. So there was a necessity that had to be handled for the population”¹⁶
(Former Performance Center Director on high-altitude training.)*

Equipped with new knowledge regarding population-level anthropometric patterns and infrastructural resources—compiled and circulated internally in the Sports Institute’s first comprehensive ‘national methodological plan’ (*‘el plan metodológico nacional’*), “the bible of all Peru at the level of elite sports training” as one bureaucrat put it—IPD researchers began training local coaches to recognize athletic potential in their home geographies, laying the groundwork for a partially decentralized, hub-and-spoke national athletics system with regional-level athletic administration that could incorporate purported talent pools across the country into an integrated elite training program. “The idea,” as was explained to me, “was to give to the trainers practical knowledge, so that they could go to the most distant provinces or districts that there were near that city or that region and *they* could spot the talent.”¹⁷

Important to note here is the way environmental exposure is conceived of as a “necessity,” one critical to the “development” of athletes for whom high-altitude ecologies figure in their sport. The integration of these environments into the training infrastructure has seen low-to-high migration of sea-level athletes to new facilities. Peruvian cyclists in particular have spent time in high-altitude regions for pre-competition training blocks, as have table tennis players, for whom the high-altitude air provides less resistance to the volleying ball, sharpening reflexes and response times between strokes. In each of these cases, the competing athletes who have the economic means to pursue more equipment-dependent sports typically come from urban hubs such as Lima. However, these upwards migrations pale in comparison to the new mobilization of impoverished populations in high-altitude regions. In Quechua populations in and around

Cusco, programmers found a sports talent pool uniquely suited, in their eyes, for endurance based athletic contests.

The founding of Cusco's Elite Performance Center (CAR) in 2008 was the coordinated labor of Peru's centralized sports bureaucracy and regional municipalities looking to participate in the prestige of elite athletics vis-à-vis this talent pool, "something aspirational and exclusive, because not all regions have a CAR,"¹⁸ according to a one-time national director of the centers. This aspiration was to be rewarded with a stream of recruited talents, because "the children that are recruited remain in their region, not in their homes but rather in the CAR, but they would no longer have to commute to a more distant CAR like the one in Lima."¹⁹ The municipality thus stood to celebrate the sporting victories of its resident athletes—like the marchers in Cusco—linking their corporeal triumphs to the region's elected officials. In so doing, the IPD created new opportunities for national incorporation, both in the sense of incorporating impoverished populations into state politics and in the sense of bringing "distant" populations into an urban state sports infrastructure. And like education campaigns at the turn of the 20th century, sport's "patriotic call to uplift the populace to modern standards" promised "a right, granted by the state at the turn of the century to all its inhabitants," with "a very seductive aspect indeed:" (de la Cadena 2001, p.271) *sport was a new means to acquire citizenship.*

2.4 Bureaucratic Efforts to Recruit Undiscovered Talents

When the national director of the Peruvian Institute of Sport spoke to local press in anticipation of the 2018 South American Games in Cochabamba, Bolivia, he broadcast high hopes for the future of Peruvian athletes:

*“The intent is always for more. A medal is always good news. It’s also important to say that we need not only medals, but also better marks. That steadily we raise the quality of the Peruvian athlete. Medal-winners aren’t all who matter to us, but also those who finish in fourth and fifth place.”*²⁰ (Carlos Zegarra, IPD Communications, 2018)

The director’s call for triumph at the ensuing competition invokes a ‘we’ that reaches beyond the Sports Institute to the broader body politic in Peru, casting quotidian ministerial work as a pressing national matter with geopolitical stakes. According to him, the country needs to “raise the quality of the Peruvian athlete” so that they ascend through the ranks into striking distance of the podium. The country needs *relative* victory, or medals (*medallas*), and *absolute* improvement, that is, better marks (*marcas*). His speech assembles two interconnected futures: short-term victory at the sporting event, and long-term progress with respect to national sports development. Peruvian athletes who competed in Cochabamba continued building towards a national sports future by netting 92 medals, more than doubling their previous outing in 2014 with a count second only to Peru’s all-time high in 1990, when Peru itself hosted the South American games in the capital city, Lima (IPD 2011 p.59 graphic #10).

Calls for the embodied potentials of national citizens to be “steadily raised” with an enduring intent “for more” echo across sports bureaucrats’ speech events. The calls interdiscursively constitute ‘talent’ as actionable social object that can be reliably developed and deployed in competitive contexts. They emanate from a communicative network of events and artifacts of varying perdurance—formal interviews, law, media publications, naturally occurring discourse—voiced by a social domain made up of athletes, coaches, biomedical professionals, a plethora of supporting administrative workers, members of the press, and viewing spectators too. All figure embodied capacities that beckon search-and-cultivate missions for future champions, envisioning the population as differentially suited for success at the “elite level.” The historical

shift in the relation between Peru's Indigenous population and the state, encapsulated in this language of sports future building, was punctuated by a momentous occasion that intensified the Sports Institute's fixation on embodied potential.

In 2013, "the year that changed the history of Peruvian sport" (*Memoria Anual IPD* 2013 p.40), Peru secured the rights to host the 2019 Pan-American Games in the capital city, Lima, an opportunity the Sports institute lauded could "transcend the very development of national sport, with the possibility of positively impacting the economy of the host country, benefiting sectors like construction, tourism, and others"²¹ (*ibid* p.5). Shortly thereafter, the Sports Institute renewed countrywide recruitment efforts to raise a team of hundreds of potential medal contenders. To incorporate new athletes into organized sport, various sectors of Peruvian government continued to focus more intently on talent detection. Once approved, the Ministry of Education's 'National Plan of the Fortification of Physical Education and School Sport'²² streamlined talent identification procedures with a three-tiered approach: to increase physical education resources to foment "maximum physical and athletic potential", to expand athletic tournaments (*juegos escolares*) in the public school system to "identify and develop athletic talents" in collaboration with the IPD, and to "accompany school age talent" to prepare for elite competition (Ministry of Education 2015 p. 5). The infrastructure of the Elite Performance Centers was called to action in the process.



Figure 2-4: Three-tiered approach to talent incorporation

(Source: Ministry of Education 2015)

Sports bureaucrats in the IPD explain that the infrastructure of the Elite Performance Centers mobilizes regionally varying resources in accordance with physical traits of local peoples, and harnesses Peru’s different environments for different kinds of metabolic conditioning and sports training. Importantly, some of the training centers are strategically located to capitalize on hypoxic environments at high-altitude as resources for resistance training. Given their high-altitude locations and high-altitude Indigenous populations, the municipalities of Junín and Cusco constructed long-distance resistance running centers in their urban hubs. Based on anthropometric averages across distinct geographic zones, the Sports Institute concentrated velocity training at lower altitudes among a statistically taller population with bio-mechanical leverages conducive to sprinting. A middle-distance center took advantage of the moderate elevation in Arequipa. In the hot, humid northeastern region of Loreto and the

coastal area of Lima new centers specialized in explosive, strength-based track and field events, as well as team sports.

In each of the Elite Performance Centers operates an administrative team divided into two interlocking modules with their pertinent components: the technical team (*equipo técnico*) composed of a technical director and the head coaches; and the biomedical team (*equipo biomédico*) composed of doctors, physical therapists, sports psychologists, and nutritionists. Staff members from these distinct components glean knowledge of the training progress of resident athletes and meet periodically to synthesize their findings. All this to meet the specific objectives of each training center: to “increase and improve the level of Peruvian sport in competitive events,” and to “classify the majority of athletes to the sporting games of the Olympic Circuit and achieve constant sports results in those events”²³ (IPD 2018, Figure 9.1, p.34).



Figure 2-5: Provincial Elite Performance Centers

(Source: IPD 2018)

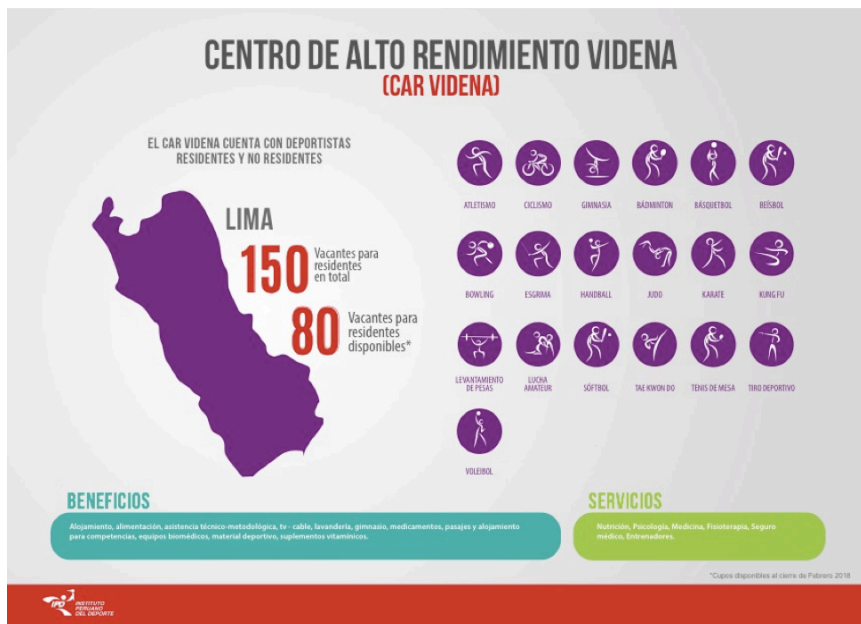


Figure 2-6: Metro Lima Performance Center

(Source: IPD 2018)

Every April, during Peru’s national track and field championships in the capital city, the ecological distribution of the system of Elite Performance Centers is recapitulated during the competition events, which iconically diagram (Mannheim 1991) the phenotypic variation of sport in Peru over the country’s geography. Starting with velocity track and field events including 100m and 200m sprints as well as jumps, Afro-Peruvian youth from the Loreto Performance Center dominate. Next, Limeños from the capital city Olympic Training Center and middle-distance runners from the Arequipa Performance Center command the 400m to 800m flat and with hurdles, as well as various throwing sports. From 1500m and up, Indigenous descended youth from the high-altitude countryside begin to dominate in lopsided contests against their sea-level peers.

Table 2-1: Recursion of Performance Center geography

Event	Sprints	Middle Distance	Long Distance
Elevation	Sea-level	Sea-level/Middle Altitude	High-Altitude
CAR Location	Loreto	Lima/Arequipa	Cusco/Junín
First Language	Spanish	Spanish/Quechua	Quechua
Climate	Jungle	Coast/Highlands	Highlands

If national track and field competitions in Peru “materialize the nation” (Foster 2002), they do so in *two* senses, that is, two performances collapse onto each other in them: the symbolic performance of the nation, and the physical performance of the citizens. There is a rigid consistency to the phenotypic distribution of athletes according to the competition events. As a spectator at a national championship, one sees the performative running of the gamut with respect to population level specializations according to event distance (sprints to middle- and

long-distance) and to geography (from urban to jungle to highlands; see Davidov 2014 on “metonymic materialities,” that is, the reduction of ecologies to salient characteristics).

Table 2-2: Sports Institute technical knowledge distribution

	Topical Focus	Domain of Use
1	Anthropometry, biometrics, and fitness tests	Recruitment protocols
2	Infrastructural tally and human resources: Total number of coaches, international level athletes, and built sports facilities	Municipal constructions of new sports infrastructures
3	Modular composition of the CAR teams	Biomedical and sports science divisions

Organizationally the IPD has restructured over recent decades by orienting its internal components towards long-term talent development, which manifests in these national championships: first by working with recreational athletes through the public school system and related youth programs (*masificación* / ‘expansion’), and later by culling outstanding talents from expansion efforts and training them as professional athletes for national and international competitions (*alto rendimiento* / ‘elite training’). Eyeing victory at the Pan-American games, then-president of the IPD Saul Barrera championed this talent detection campaign sensitive to Peruvian geographic diversity while foregrounding sports-specific “bio-typological” aptitudes that could be channeled towards future competition success. “There is a coordinated effort with the goal of detecting talents high and wide in the Peruvian territory, that are natives of that zone,” he explained, continuing to note “we have a great biotype for the national sport of combat; we possess very good sprinters”²⁴ (Saul Barrera, *diariocorreo*, August 2015).



Figure 2-7: Pyramidal recruitment protocols

(Source: IPD 2014)

Table 2-3: Sports Institute talent recruitment sectors

Sector	Participants
i - Base sports (<i>Masificación</i>)	Urban School Aged Youth
ii - Recruitment (<i>Formación</i>)	Nation wide
iii - Development (<i>Desarrollo</i>)	Urban Athletes
iv - Elite Training (<i>Alto Rendimiento</i>)	Residents of Performance Center Infrastructure

In the last years, these new recruitment efforts dovetailed with constitutional amendments to “potentialize sports talent” in the national sports system, which bolster the IPD’s resources for the “capturing of athletic talents”²⁵ throughout Peru’s distinct geographic zones (Law N30832, Article 1, 5, July 2018). Legislative efforts have also been complemented with technological innovations, like the development and release of the mobile talent detection application *La*

Academia (The Academy). The centralized database for sports metrics facilitates rapid and efficient information flow from local coaches dispersed throughout the country to national sports bureaucrats in the IPD headquarters. The director of the Recreation and Sports Promotion Directorate²⁶ applauded the tool upon its release, celebrating Peru for advancing to the vanguard of sports technology in the lead up to hosting global competitions locally:

“With this application we put ourselves at the vanguard of the countries of the world because interesting events are coming to us as local [ones]. We will advance greatly through the inclusion of technology in sport so that we recognize our athletes from every corner of our country”²⁷ (Jean Ferrari, IPD 2018).

The Institute pursues national prestige by mobilizing this diverse array of institutional resources. Foreign coaches fill the Sports Institute ranks, who come from Latin America and beyond: from Cuba, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Bulgaria, and Russia. Institute bureaucrats tap into globalized sports knowledge, traveling across the globe to competitions and for technical training in sports methodology, human physiology, physical therapy and athletic nutrition. The institute constantly interfaces with world-level sports governing bodies like the World Anti-Doping Agency, the Olympic Committee, and global athletic federations. It is keyed into a global sports culture, equipped to build a sports future fueled by competition success. In other words, seeking latent potentiality among the citizenry to develop with an eye towards future triumph, it animates athletic talent, brings it into being and thereafter chases it down.

Table 2-4: Sports Institute linguistic markers of resource materiality

Type	Examples
i - future oriented verb forms and nouns: subjunctive and future conjugations	<i>vaya subiendo, mejoren, avanzaremos, conozcan [a nuestros deportistas], potencial</i>
ii - semantics of concealment	“ <i>detection,</i> ” “ <i>recognition,</i> ” “ <i>capture</i> ”
iii - naturalizing noun phrases:	<i>athletic/physical talent, biotype, natives</i>
iv - capacities distributed across an imagined territory replete with sports resources that beckon reconnaissance.	<i>high and wide, and from every corner of the country</i>

To note here is the striking *absence* of the racializing language characteristic of centuries of debates regarding the place of Indigenous populations in Peru. Absent, for example, is any mention of the so-called ‘*mestizo*’, ‘*indio*’, or ‘*serrano*’, the quintessential characters of Andeanist political discourse for Mariategui (1934) and Arguedas (1975). However, the simple absence of these terms should not lead us to believe the historical currents within which talent recruitment unfolds do not articulate with colonial and national histories of incorporation. When sports methodologists claim that people “on the coast are much taller than in the highlands, and that provides for longer bony leverages so they can run faster,”²⁸ they nevertheless invoke centuries of segregationist policy that has structured the social separation of so-called “geographic” populations. This embodied capital is imagined as deriving from the environment in which it develops, and the Peruvian Institute of Sport, with its chain of training centers, attempts to “exploit ecologies not only by reshaping them but also by taking advantage of their capacities,” such that “living things made within ecological processes are coopted for concentration of wealth,” the “salvage” capitalism of Tsing’s estimation (2015 p.62).

One might imagine these budding stars thus “turn themselves into their own executioners, consenting as it were, to their reduction to a status of ‘a most miserable commodity’” (Scheper

Hughes and Wacquant 2002, p.8), that they are beckoned into a global sports market within which to monetize their “embodied capital.” Anka encourages us to dig deeper and ask how athletes come to recognize their own embodied capital in the first place. When we turn to athletes and coaches on the ground in and around the Elite Performance Center in Cusco, we find that embodied capacities are *both the target and the outcome* of political and historical processes. To make this point we must leave the Sports Institute’s national head quarters and return to the track, before trekking alongside coaches and athletes deep into the hills that surround Cusco.

2.5 Communicative Deliberations of Athletic Talent

Every three or so months, the resident athletes in Cusco cut post-training naps short, emerging from their dormitories and gravitating to the administrative offices under pretense of needing to ask a question or request permission for a trip outside the compound. They snoop around, to “overhear” a comment, a conversation, any snippet of talk that might rattle through the windowpanes. At intervals, the performance center administrators meet to deliberate severing ties with residents for underwhelming performances or for disciplinary infractions. This, after investing countless hours of technical instruction, supervision, guidance, and encouragement, year after year, daily, from dawn until dusk, in the quest to transform them into championship caliber competitors. These are not easy decisions.

For fear of being overhead by amateur detectives through the thinner walls of the administrative offices at the entrance to the building, the entire staff relocates to the basement. The scene is conspiratorial: thick concrete walls, the hum of generators and water pumps, a long table illuminated by ominous lights hanging atop. At the table sit coaches, a nutritionist, a sports psychologist, a physical therapist, the technical director of the training center and his secretary,

as well as a handful of bureaucrats from the Regional Sports Council who interface between the center and the Sports Institute’s national headquarters. All speak in hushed tones until the large metal door to the area is securely closed. After the requisite formalities, the technical director begins the proceedings.

Throughout the course of athletic training there are peaks and valleys, spikes and dips in the performance metrics with which trainers gauge progress. A degree of variation is to be expected, so long as the overall trend is upwards. When progress stalls for long periods of time, the staff intervenes to deliberate the reasons and to formulate a plan for resolving the issue. They must conversationally ascribe problems to causes, and the corrective course of action depends entirely on the kind of cause in question. Causes can be ascribed to physical traits, calling for biomedical interventions such as blood testing or urgent care from a physical therapist. Causes can be ascribed to psychological distress, mobilizing evaluations to clarify possible problems with family and peers. But some problems may be deemed insurmountable.

When the staff begins to deliberate cuts, they focus on Atoq, who in their view has seen next to no progress since entering the training center, consistently arriving in the rear of the pack. There is widespread consensus that he should have never entered the compound in the first place, that the head coaches were entirely opposed to it. Victoria, the secretary to the technical director, concedes that while it may be true that Atoq shouldn’t have entered, once in, he must be treated as a part of the team, as *‘our athlete’ (nuestro deportista)*. Victoria proposes that they invite him to explain his side of the story [1]:

1.	Victoria	<i>Y conversar con el a ver que es lo que pasa, ¿no?</i> “And speak with him to see what’s going on, right?”
2.		<i>O sea no se si alguien [le-</i> “I mean, I don’t know if someone-”

3.	Julio	<i>[No pasa nada Victoria</i> “Nothing is going on, Victoria.”
4.		<i>Es que no pasa nada=</i> “It’s that nothing is going on.”
5.	Daniel	<i>=Es que no hay nivel</i> “It’s that there’s no level.”
6.	Julio	<i>O sea</i> “I mean,”
7.		<i>Primero, no debió de entrar</i> “First, he shouldn’t have entered,”
8.		<i>Como ha dicho Idalberto</i> “As Idalberto has said.”
9.		<i>Segundo, no pasa nada</i> “Second, nothing is going on.”
10.		<i>Es que esta en lo mismo</i> “It’s that he’s at the same level,”
11.		<i>O sea</i> “I mean,”
12.		<i>No es</i> “It’s not,”
13.		<i>No es que</i> “It’s not that,”
14.		<i>O sea</i> “I mean,”
15.		<i>No es un chico [que no</i> “He isn’t a boy who doesn’t,”
16.	Victoria	<i>[Con condiciones=</i> “With conditions.”
17.	Julio	<i>=No es un chico que no entrenaba=</i> “He isn’t a boy who wasn’t training.”
18.	Daniel	<i>=Siempre ha entrenado</i> “He has always trained.”

Regarding the promise of Atoq, a long-distance runner with three months under his belt in the Performance Center, Julio, Victoria, and Daniel come to agree that his limits are fundamentally insurmountable: “it’s that nothing is going on” (*es que no pasa nada*), asserts Julio; “it’s that there’s no level” (*es que no hay nivel*), retorts Daniel [3-5]. The problem, as they define it, is that Atoq is not “with conditions” (*con condiciones*) for athletic success. He is not “a boy who wasn’t training” (*un chico que no entrenaba*); rather, “he has always trained” (*siempre ha entrenado*).

Atoq, they claim, had participated in formal training for years as an athlete in the Sports Institute's urban marathon program before entering the training center, and his progress had stalled long before coaches in the compound got their hands on him. He entered the center having already stagnated, and months later he is "at the same level" (*está en lo mismo*), unchanged, running laps on the same insurmountable plateau with no indication that he will ever overcome it.

Head coaches Idalberto and Julio laugh when the technical director proposes a possible change of coach. Idalberto is charismatic and bubbling with energy. He arrives to the center early and leaves late, and yet he never seems fatigued, his voice never tires, despite his daily yelling. In the afternoons, his posture is perfect as Julio slumps beside him on the lookout tower, dozing off like clockwork after the insulin spike of his late-day, carbohydrate snack. Julio is, in many respects, Idalberto's opposite: choleric and distant, simmering and reserved. But on the point of Atoq's potential they are in perfect agreement, a deliberative union that echoes in stance acts spanning the full stretch of discourse, an interactional text of the composite parts of the technical staff working in unison to attribute causes to frustrating problems. This unwavering scrutiny of the purported "level" of trainees propels meetings where administrators and staff convene to hypothesize the continued success or failure of their athletes. To note is that ascriptions of talent and their reckoning are narrative practices that weave together biographies and training metrics. The coaches gel events into coherent narratives both retrospectively and prospectively, figuring the athletes in stories of it-was-destined-to-be or it-never-could-be, on occasion pointing to early childhood qualities that, they claim, indicated future success, or to lagging conditions that, they contend, foretold inevitable failures, as is the case with Atoq.

Yet while potential is the focus of these meetings, it is regularly complemented with an assessment of disciplinary comportment. Consider that, as they assess his value as an athlete on the roster, the coaches conversationally tease apart Atoq’s purported training level from his other behavioral qualities. Having dismissed his talent as self-evidently lacking, in an ensuing maneuver they praise Atoq’s “character” (*actitud*):

1.	Julio	<i>Para yo mas bien del chico</i> “For- On the other hand the boy,”	
2.		<i>Yo si avalo su comportamiento=</i> “I do endorse his behavior.”	Separation of ‘ <i>nivel</i> ’ and ‘ <i>comportamiento</i> ’.
3.	Idalberto	= <i>[Eso si</i> “That’s right.”	
4.	Daniel	= <i>[Si es correcto</i> “Yes, he’s standup.”	
5.		<i>Es correcto</i> “He’s standup.”	
6.	Julio	<i>Su dedicación=</i> “His dedication.”	Characterological attribute – ‘ <i>dedicación</i> ’.
7.	Daniel	= <i>Tiene actitud</i> “He has character.”	Characterological attribute – ‘ <i>actitud</i> ’.
8.	Julio	<i>Así como a mi la mayoría de ese grupo</i> “As the majority of that group to me-”	Referring to a non-present head coach’s group.
9.		<i>No, no va conmigo porque</i> “No, they don’t get along with me because,”	
10.		<i>Porque todos, todos tienen problemas</i> “Because they all, they all have problems.”	
11.		<i>Pero ese chico de verdad correcto</i> “But that boy is truly standup,”	Characterological attribute – ‘ <i>correcto</i> ’.
12.		<i>Para que</i> “Why,”	
13.		<i>Para que decir</i> “Why would I say,”	
14.		<i>O sea es chico respetuoso</i> “I mean the boy is respectful,”	Characterological attribute – ‘ <i>respetuoso</i> ’.
15.		<i>Conmigo cien por cien</i> “With me one hundred percent.”	
16.		<i>[No, nada que</i> “No, nothing that,”	
17.	Victoria	<i>[Para ser mayor también pide permisos=</i> “Even as a senior he asks for permission.”	<i>I.e.</i> , permission to leave the training center.

18.	Julio	= <i>Si si si</i> “Yes, yes, yes.”	
19.	Idalberto	<i>No no [en ese sentido</i> “No, no in that regard,”	
20.	Bureaucrat1	<i>[Entonces</i> “So-”	
21.	Idalberto	<i>Creo que es uno de los mejores</i> “I believe he is one of the best,”	
22.		<i>Que tenemos en el CEAR</i> “That we have in the CEAR.”	

One judge after another takes a stance, positively evaluating Atoq’s compoartment, and so ensues a snowball of alignment that traces a characterological figure, one who is ‘dedicated’, ‘standup’, ‘respectful’, who has ‘character’ but not the conditions to succeed in metrics that matter most. The first alignment, with respect to Atoq’s training level, and the second, with respect to his affect, complement one another: he is, by all estimations, underwhelming on the track, but a class act when it comes to discipline and respectfulness off it.

But why talk about Atoq’s character at all if he has no chance to make it as an athlete? If his physical potential is so under par to begin with what difference does an assessment of his dedication and respectfulness make? Why is “character” a point of contention for staff members at all, and what is its relation to athletic development? Might it be that for the staff “the conditions” of a training “level”, by themselves, are not enough to guarantee success on the field of play? In a way, the choral ode of praise for Atoq’s self-discipline sounds awfully like a lament, a melancholy affirmation that his better half would exponentiate his training, if in fact the “conditions” were there to be developed in the first place. But they are not there; Atoq, by all accounts, is incurable, a lost cause, in that no matter his commitment or dedication, he is doomed, never to surmount the glaring lack of capacity, an absence that defines him. So, why not recruit more carefully from the more populated and close-by urban hub of Cusco? What Andean

“conditions” do sports prospectors envision that compels them to journey over mountains and valleys to test the physical fitness of rural Quechua children, to the exclusion of others like Atoq?

2.6 Somatic Geographies and the Distant Corners of New Migrations

Though hypoxic exposure is a pre-condition for recruitment to Cusco’s Elite Performance Center, it is not the sole criterion. Aware of the purported athletic edge of Quechua biology from the perspective of scientific investigation, scouts are attuned to a broader swath of human-environment interactions that urge them to exit Cusco’s urban maze and enter the rolling hills and mountains that encircle the city. Consider, for example, that children who develop in the urban hubs of the department of Cusco are equally exposed to hypoxia but, according to scouts, mature without the childhood *kilometraje*—base training—that makes rural recruits more appealing. For head coach Julio, this spatial organization seems even to take precedence over the effects of high-altitude development:

“I believe, well, without a doubt the altitude helps considerably as well, you know, to develop aerobic capacity. But apart from that I believe the fact that from childhood onwards they are walking, they are racing, not exactly running with a preparation let’s say designed by a coach but in some manner they are in constant activity behind the animals, to go to the chakra,²⁹ to go, in order to not arrive late to school, and to race a little even among their friends. As everything is countryside it provides...it inspires, no? In some form, to run. Things that, well, that don’t happen in the city because you run and you have a car, a horn that kills your ears.”³⁰

Scouts envision the countryside as a political-ecological formation that generates and “inspires” particular kinds of movement, notably ones that are quickly becoming impossible in the growing urban centers of the department of Cusco.

The narrative practices of sports programmers in the Andes inter-animate one another, as coaches and athletes come together to envision hypoxia and the lifestyle characteristics of Quechua populations in the rural Andes as a momentary intersection of historical, ecological, and developmental trajectories that crystallize into an emergent capacity. It is emergent because the effects of the whole are irreducible to the parts: neither high-altitude, nor long commutes, nor the patterned movements of subsistence agriculture generate athletic talent alone, but the interactions among them actuate a multi-faceted potential tethered to the landscape. According to coaches in the Elite Performance Center, these children have *always* been training, *just without knowing it*:

“These kids come gifted with an important aerobic capacity. But if they are gifted with an aerobic capacity I believe it is because they are born in very difficult social conditions where they have to confront so many adversities, so I think because of the sistematicity they achieve a certain capacity from the work they do in the countryside as well as from the work they do commuting- for the long distances they cover while commuting to those schools. Anka says that when he was six years old he walked to school with his backpack for an hour...without knowing it he was practically doing a training session.”³¹

Viewed retrospectively, the children are coached by the landscape. They were commuting to and from school, but also systematically familiarizing themselves with the embodied subjectivity of long-distance running. Their movements are coopted by the sports bureaucracy, reconstituted such that their developmental timeline is narratively re-construed.

Alongside coaches who retrospectively construe commutes as dedicated, deliberate practice, athletes re-read their history through new embodied knowledge after years of training. Indeed, the vocabulary of endurance running peppers the speech many of the athletes in the training center when they reflect on how talent scouts envision the physical potential of youth from the countryside in both Spanish and in Quechua³². When ruminating on why so many of the

athletes in the center come from the provincial hinterlands, Anka explains what athletes call a theory of “innate training”:

*Psicologicamente, mentalmente ruwakun irqi campopi mas fuerte que ciudadmanta. ¿Imanaqtin? Nuqa yachani, iskay larupi tiyaspa, ciudadpi tiyaspa campopi tiyaspa yachani. Ciudadpi irqi kayman carro huchuymanta chayqa carro kayman karan mamay qolqeta qowan karan. Campopi purinkutaq qanchis kilometrota o chunka kilometrota wakin parte tenenku phawaspa wakin parte tenenku purispa wakin partetaq tenenku bajada wakin parte subida, ruwankusun entrenamiento **innato** nuqapa ruwaran anchay entrenamiento kunanña ripurakuni entrenamiento **innato** ruwasqayta mana antes, kunanña ripurani nuqapas qanchis wata kaspá.*

*Psychologically, mentally it makes the countryside kids stronger than the city ones. Why? I know, I have lived in both sides, in the city and the countryside I know. In the city as a child there would be a car from when I was little, so there would be a car, my mother would give me money. In the countryside they walk seven or ten kilometers, some parts you have to run, some parts you have to walk, some parts you have to descend, some parts climb. It makes them, an **innate** training made me, that training I now see as **innate** training made me. Before, I didn't, now I see it of my being seven years old.*

Much like in his account of the spirit of sport, Anka explains that he was not aware of this so-called innate training while he was a young boy in the countryside, that only now, after years of *dedicated* improvement that have equipped him to understand what was happening on all his morning commutes, has he arrived at this conclusion, that innate training “made” him. He has, in other words, learned to articulate the specifics of his talent, learned to draw narrative coherence between his rural origins and his city training in the Sports Institute’s infrastructure by painting “images of personhood” (Agha 2007; c.f. “identity images” in Sanjinés 2013) who inhabit rural and urban spaces to differing training outcomes. These images of personhood inform ascriptions of talent for athletes reminiscing on their arrival to the center, who reconcile the training of the countryside with the systematic training of the city, like Inti does, for example:

“That made the difference so that I had results because the others, as I understood, they already had training with their physical education professor, there were track-and-field clubs in Sonqo and Pacha. But in my case it was natural, it was a gift, it was something God Himself had given me to exploit³³.”

Read in the broader context of local theorizations of talent, such an ascription of physical potential to “natural” gifts reads less like a biological attribution; instead it presupposes routinized movements differentially distributed across rural and urban spaces in the Andean highlands.

Looking over Sports Institute’s yearly budgeting plans one can see that methodologists in the national headquarters are well-aware of neurological and cognitive accounts of expert performance that cite baseline statistics for hours of investment in deliberate practice for sport and skill-specific expertise (e.g., Ericsson 2006; Jäncke et al 2009), routinely quoting them in long accounts of the population level potential of Peru’s citizenry. But for scouts in the Andes, the interplay between an extreme, high-altitude environment, inherited and acquired physical adaptations to that environment, and sociopolitical inequality that relegates Quechua populations to remain in that environment, generates a *somatic geography* of long-distance runners in the Andean countryside who *unknowingly* practice for a sport they will only come to recognize later. If indeed there are physical adaptations of the neurological, musculo-skeletal, and developmental kinds, they are not pursued as such, but instead registered *qua* practice after the fact.

Like Anka, coaches also trace characterological figures of rural and city living that distribute embodied behaviors in social spaces, linking the so-called “organic sports formation” of the rural lifestyle with “an armor of will of and of overcoming so many adversities” (*una coraza de voluntad y de imponerse a tantas adversidades*). Importantly, for coaches it is not only the long commutes of school-aged children that prime them for long-term athletic cultivation, but also the labor demands of agrarian life. With respect to these demands, coaches differentiate

qualities of perseverance and will between urban and rural counterparts, like Anka narrating somatic geographies that stand in stark contrast:

“The other thing is the work they have to do in the countryside from a very young age. They have to help with work, shepherding, working with the potatoes, different activities that make this armor that they form from will, from force, from sacrifice every day, the difference from the kid in the city. What will there be with the kid from the city? The internet. The bus in order to go to school. Or if not, the parent drives them in their car to school. Or if not, the games, the cell phone all day. And those kids see nothing of those things.”³⁴

For most coaches, therefore, urban talent is an oxymoron. The rapid expansion of automobile infrastructure—intensified more so by recent mining operations—has, in their estimation, changed the nature of commuting for an enormous swath of the young, high-altitude population. Most urban youth no longer walk but travel in bus or by motorcycle across long distances to school.

Notably, this envisioning inverts a long history of Andean discrimination: against common ethnographic observations in the Andes that rurality is intimately associated with barbarity and backwardness (de la Cadena 2000; Huayhua 2013), among sports prospectors at high altitude, rural is not “alien to modernity,” (Franco 2006) but rather *revered*. Sports prospecting in Peruvian Andes is a revalorizing process, reconfigurations in the regimentation of object-signs, and the changing valuation of rural Quechua populations undergirds new “alignments among social groups which engage each other through a series of historical tropes” (Agha 2007 p.176), tropes circulating among factions of Peruvian society concerning the embodied labor of Quechua populations.

Table 2-5: Revalorization of object signs in reckoning athletic potential

Population	Object signs	Location	Metasign I	Revalorizing Process >>>	= Metasign II
Rural	Bare feet, Quechua speaking, Commutes	Cusco Countryside, Provincias	Backward, Inferior, “Alien to modernity”	Sports Prospecting	Athletic Potential
Urban	Shoes, Spanish, Cell phone use, Bicycle/moto transport	Urban hubs, Cusco city	Modern, <i>educado</i>	Sports Prospecting	Weak Will, Developmentally Shielded

Combined with the creeping presence of telecommunication distractions in population centers, this change has shallowed the urban talent pool to the point of being inconsequential.

“The adolescent starts accommodating a little more in those communities so distant from here. What’s happened? In many places, for example in Pacha and Sonqo, mining has developed so much that the quality of life has improved a bit. What do parents do? Well, buy a motorcycle, or buy a bicycle. So the child no longer commutes an hour, an hour and a half, two hours like they did maybe eight or ten years ago, but rather now they go in their motorcycles, they carry their siblings, or they go on bicycle, they seek another form of travel to alleviate the difficulties.”³⁵

Coaches explain that in the quest for new talents they must race against infrastructural development: as mining accelerates new roads are constructed, bringing more vehicles and easier transportation between schools and outlying Indigenous communities. Within a few years children are no longer commuting on foot. Growing up near the mines many aspire to work in them. These changes are creeping across the highlands, altering well-trodden pathways and movement over them.

Fewer steps mean fewer commutes. Julio and Idalberto generally scoff at the idea of recruiting from urban hubs, and what little recruitment they conduct in the capital cities of the provinces of *Sonqo* and *Pacha* is aimed at driving home the grand disparity in performance between urban and rural children to overseeing bureaucrats. However, changes are transforming the conditions within which they conduct their work as well, for the athletes they pursue are themselves drawn into the cities. Anka's words communicate the dilemma, for he has long imagined how to bring his own family from the countryside to the city:

Table 2-6: Socioeconomic factors in Anka's athletic migration.

<i>Anchay nuqaq motivación chay karan chaymantataq familiay mamay. Chay karan, primeras motivaciones gallariqtiy. Kunanqa, mamay familiay salir del campo, chaykuna motivawan. Traer a mi mama, mi papa, llevarlos a otro sitios, salir del socioeconómico que hemos tenido.</i>
<i>Eso ha sido mi motivation, mi familia, mi mama. Esas han sido mis primeras motivaciones para empezar. Ahora, mi mama, mi familia, salir del campo, eso me motiva. Traer a mama, mi papa, llevarlos a otros sitios, salir del socioeconomico que hemos tenido.</i>
“That was my motivation, my family, my mother. Those were my first motivations in order to begin. Now, my mother, my family, to leave the countryside, that motivates me. To bring my mother, my father, to take them to other places, to escape the socioeconomic that we have had.”

Nearly ten years after its founding, the performance center recruits new athletes from villages deep in the folds of the mountains of *Sonqo* and *Pacha*. Changes to rural infrastructure are shifting the somatic geography, gradually altering the talent pool by affecting early childhood training regimens in ways that diminish the total walking and running volume, the *kilometraje*, of rural youth. But there is time yet, coaches say. Idalberto pines to reach new talent pools:

“There continue to be kids who still continue in places extremely hidden that we haven't reached, sometimes because of conditions, time. Won't there be? There have to be. I sometimes say, I believe that in the region of Cusco there have to be five Anka's. Why can't there be five Anka's in the region of Cusco? And if they found five Anka's I'm convinced that track and field would take a giant leap forward. Because there may be five

Anka's, and there may be five Nina's, and five Phawaq's, and five Huayra's, but we have not been able to reach all the most distant corners because of the difficult geography.³⁶

The potential coaches actively seek in the far reaches of the countryside is the product of a diverse array of historic and social factors, including the long-standing segregation of rural high-altitude populations from urban hubs, underdevelopment of infrastructure, and minimal access to Ministry of Education school houses that necessitates long and arduous commutes on foot. The potential that the staff invokes *is an ecologically mediated one*, a situated developmental capacity particular to the social formation of rural Quechua populations. Coaches largely dismiss urban athletes because, in their estimation, they are developmentally soft, shielded from the purportedly demanding tasks that distinguish the rural lifestyle. There is a situated developmental trajectory as well, a culturally mediated, underwhelming physicality that emerges in a situation of mass transit and an absence of demanding physical labor. In essence, the calculus with which administrators make decisions regarding the fate of the athletes does not pit biology against culture, but rather two politically mediated social formations, two **somatic geographies**, against each other: urban and rural.

In their estimation, these mediated physicalities are *converging*, as children move educationally and vocationally away from their home villages, entering urban areas in the pursuit of work or education, and as entire populations shift lifestyles away from the intensive work of commuting and subsistence agriculture. In a way, athletic recruitment is an anti-migration, anti-modernity story: coaches are hoping *against* lauded national developments incorporating Quechua populations through expanded infrastructure (Dalakoglou & Harvey 2012). There is a shifting somatic geography within which coaches do their work, within which they trek to the far reaches of the countryside to find talent before it is swallowed up by mines or pulled into cities.

2.7 Conclusion: Bringing Semiotic Anthropology to Bear on Embodied Ecology

Anthropologists theorizing human-environment interactions have come to a series of urgent realizations regarding the entanglement of the body and ecology: that the body is more than a static, bounded, biological entity fully determined by genetic code (Lock & Farquhar 2007); that genes themselves are increasingly understood to be an environment-sensitive network that conditions reactive processes in response to environmental stimuli (Keller 2014; Landecker 2011); in sum, that the body and the environment are mutually constituted along diverse pathways. But athletes and talent scouts in the Andes need no anthropological intervention to enliven them to “the continual interactions of biological and social processes across time and space that sediment into local biologies, in effect precipitating artifacts—snapshots of ceaseless entangled change” (Lock 2017, p. 8; Lock & Nguyen 2010, p. 90). Their ascriptions of athletic potential are neither to genetics nor to Indigenous essence (Brodwin 2002), but rather to an assemblage of entangled politico-ecological processes, a somatic geography that explodes any preconceived notion of the separability of biology and culture. In their estimation, “natural” training is a recapitulation of training in political ecology; it is “organic” insofar as the form of the activity and the landscape emerge together.

Athletic talents, like natural resources, are thus “inherently distributed things whose essence or character is to be located neither exclusively in their biophysical properties nor in webs of socio-cultural meaning” (Richardson & Weszkalnys 2014 p.8). Insofar as “people appear to ascribe potentiality to those things they believe can be manipulated (or they desire to manipulate) and not to those perceived as being beyond human control (or seen as not in need of change)” (Taussig, Hoeyer, & Helmreich 2013), this human-environment interaction becomes the focal point of athletic development because coaches believe it is *amenable* to cultivation.

Here, “past movements leave indexical traces which channel future movements in iconic ways” (Kockelman 2008 p.416); high-altitude Quechua populations did not simply come into existence for the Sports Institute to ransack them. Rather, their perdurance in the Andes is the historical outcome of centuries of segregationist policy that has tied them to the landscape, and their involvement in organized athletics is the political outcome of an emerging and engulfing global sports culture.

Note, then, that these are *anti-essentialist* ascriptions: trawling the highlands, coaches do not pursue a bounded biological body, they seek a body moving in an environment they presume has “an inherent potentiality to translate things, bodies and ideas” (Di Giminiani & Haines 2019: 2) into cultivable capacities. The potential that prospectors pursue is an emergent human-environment interaction *distributed* in the social formation of rural Quechua populations. Recognizing that the body is illuminated by historical shifts in regimes of corporeal labor, we can begin to understand that it is “non-detachable” (Agha 2007, p.24), that is, it is shorn of its purported potential once decontextualized. Thus, to speak of an embodied potential or ‘use-value’ is to recognize it as the emergent outcome of a socio-historical “regime of value” (Kroskrity et al 2000) that differentially cultivates meta-semiotically typifiable corporeal possibilities (e.g., see Salzinger 2003 for gendered cultivation in manual labor, Young 1980 for gendered socialization to movement patterns).

Across the mosaic of this somatic geography we find circulating notions of embodied potential that privilege certain kinds of bodies and disqualify others, revealing to us how state bureaucracies envision natural resources and human capital as they aspire to “link up” to global cultures. In the new valence of biophysical talent, sports bureaucrats recapitulate “a reductionist and stereotypical tendency regarding the rural condition, with which is constructed a discourse of

a subject who ‘in spite of’ difficulties, triumphs” (Back and Zavala 2018, p.383). Back and Zavala note that “the ‘in spite of’ alerts us that there is a continuity of the discourses that oppose urban and rural and enclose the Andean subject within a space and proper practices of ‘Andean culture’” (*ibid*). As I proceed to show, athletes learn to recapitulate this discourse by situating themselves within autobiographical tales of self-improvement, which narrativize their journeys from rural villages or humble urban beginnings to the athletic establishment as ones of taking advantage of opportunities for growth.

The embodied movement and potentials of high-altitude Quechua runners have come to be theorized as cultivable objects by bureaucrats chasing national success at impending competitions, by coaches pursuing vocational prestige with champion disciples, and by athletes pursuing income and glory on the world stage. Divergent accounts of talent between the Sports Institute’s head quarters and the training center itself thus provoke antagonisms of various sorts regarding the best manner to cultivate embodied potentiality, a contest for cultural brokers to mediate the embodied registers of the somatic geography of the highlands (Mannheim 2015; see also Orlove 1998 on Andean valorizations of “distance from the earth” as a means of differentiating the racial categories of *mestizo* and *indio*). These antagonisms, as well as the power relations that hold between the different categories of meta-pragmatic evaluators in the Sports Institute, run throughout the remainder of the dissertation.

¹ “Bueno el proceso empieza así ¿no? Empiezas a correr cargando mochila para alcanzar la hora, una responsabilidad es que llegas a la punta hora y como no hay transporte, nadie que te traslade a tu universidad, a tus estudios, a tu colegio, a la escuela, siempre estas adquiriendo, ¿no? Todo, todo tu espíritu deportivo. Pero sin embargo en esos años yo no sabía que es el deporte ¿no? O sea, no tenía esa emoción de que yo estoy formado para el deporte, solamente lo que me interesaba más era estudio.”

² Note that in 2019 the IAAF changed to ‘World Athletics.’ Since this fieldwork was conducted before the name

change, and because athletes and coaches refer to the federation with the old acronym at times, I use the old name here and throughout the dissertation.

³ Similar assessments can be found of Fijians who “view the masculinized labor of rugby in terms of an emic warrior ideal of masculinity, imagined as innate to itaukei men” (Guinness 2018 p.315).

⁴ “*Viene la familia deportiva integrada en primer orden por los deportistas calificados de alto nivel, que se desarrollan directamente en el Centro de Entrenamiento y Alto Rendimiento, que obtienen medallas a nivel nacional e internacional*”

⁵ “*Quiero saludar a todos los trabajadores del IPD. Algunos ya han dejado un legado muy importante para la institución y se mantienen hasta hoy, y ahora con los nuevos tiempos que vive el IPD con el tema de Juegos Panamericanos, con el tema de los Juegos Bolivarianos y los Sudamericanos, creo que el ansiado crecimiento que anhelamos en nuestro país ya se viene dando en varias disciplinas*” (President of the IPD Oscar Fernández Cáceres).

⁶ “*Buscó liquidar las bases del poder de la oligarquía en Perú, un reducido conjunto de familias cohesionadas por vínculos de parentesco y amistad que tenían el control de las principales actividades económicas.*”

⁷ “*Donde el gobierno militar corporativista buscaba fomentar la participación popular, pero a la vez requería mantener un control centralizado del proceso.*”

⁸ *Ley de Reforma Agraria.*

⁹ *Ley Orgánica del Deporte Nacional.*

¹⁰ “*Mejorar y desarrollar el nivel físico, psíquico, y biológico de la población*”

¹¹ *Ley de la Promoción y Desarrollo del Deporte.*

¹² Most recently in 2013 with *Convenio N014-2013-IPD-CUBADEPORTES-S.A.*, which brought many of the methodologists who worked closely on the preparations for the Pan-American Games in Lima.

¹³ “*Todos los programas estaban enfocados, la mayoría, en masificación y promoción deportiva, es decir el deporte base: fomentar el movimiento, la actividad física etcétera... También tenían que potenciar y fortalecer programas que fomenten el alto rendimiento, brinden un servicio para el deportista de alto rendimiento, y eso solamente había en Lima.*”

¹⁴ “*De tal manera que permita formular científicamente criterios de detección de talentos deportivos.*”

¹⁵ Note also the use of Incan architecture underlying an Inka-fied Vitruvian Man, the presupposition of timeless anthropometric potentials in a regionally specific population.

¹⁶ “*¿Entonces que hacíamos con los demás deportistas que sus deportes necesitan la altura para desarrollarse y no pueden hacerlos en Lima que estamos a nivel del mar? ¿Que hay con ellas? Estaban desatendidos. Pues allí había una necesidad que había que cubrir para la población.*”

¹⁷ “*La idea era darles a los entrenadores un conocimiento práctico, para que ellos puedan ir a las provincias o distritos más alejados que hubiesen cerca de esa ciudad o esa región y que ellos pudiesen reconocer el talento.*”

¹⁸ “*Más que todo era el tema de la imagen, que la municipalidad esté atraída por el tema de tener un CAR en su región, es como algo aspiracional, y exclusivo porque no todas las regiones tienen un CAR en su región.*”

¹⁹ “*Los chicos que se captan se quedan en su región a vivir, pero no en sus casas sino en el CAR, pero ya no tendrían que trasladarse a un CAR más lejano como el en Lima o como es a otras regiones.*”

²⁰ “*Siempre se intenta ir a más. Una medalla siempre es buena noticia. También es importante decir que no solo necesitamos las medallas, sino también de que las marcas mejoren. Que de a poco vayamos subiendo la calidad del deportista peruano. No solo nos importa los que logran las medallas, sino también los que ocupan los cuartos y quintos lugares.*”

²¹ “*Cuya implicancia trasciende al propio desarrollo del deporte nacional, pudiendo impactar positivamente en la economía del país anfitrión, beneficiando sectores como construcción, turismo, entre otros.*”

²² *Plan Nacional de Fortalecimiento de la Educación Física y el Deporte Escolar.*

²³ “*Incrementar y mejorar el nivel del deporte peruano en los eventos competitivos*” y “*Clasificar a la mayor cantidad de deportistas a los Juegos deportivos del Circuito Olímpico y lograr conseguir resultados deportivos en dichos eventos.*”

²⁴ “*Hay una articulación coordinada a fin de detectar talentos a lo ancho y alto del territorio peruano, que son oriundos de esa zona; tenemos un muy buen biotipo para el deporte nacional de combate; poseemos muy buenos velocistas.*”

²⁵ “Captación de talentos deportivos”.

²⁶ Dirección de Recreación y Promoción del Deporte.

²⁷ “Con esta aplicación nos ponemos a la vanguardia de los países del orbe porque se nos vienen interesantes eventos como locales. Avanzaremos muchísimo en incluir la tecnología al deporte para que conozcan a nuestros deportistas desde todos los rincones de nuestro país”.

²⁸ “En la costa son mucho mas altos que en la sierra, y eso hace de que las palancas óseas sean mayores y pueden correr también mas rápido.”

²⁹ Quechua, ‘field’, e.g., for harvest, for livestock.

³⁰ “Yo creo, bueno, sin duda que la altura también ayuda bastante, ¿no? Para poder desarrollar la capacidad aeróbica. Pero aparte de eso yo creo el hecho de que desde pequeños están caminando, están correteando, no se a lo mejor corriendo con una preparación diríamos diseñada por un entrenador pero de alguna manera ellos están en constante actividad detrás de los animales, para ir a la chakra, para ir, para no llegar tarde al colegio y corretear un poco hasta entre sus mismos compañeros. Como todo es campo pues da, da ganas, ¿no? De alguna manera de correr, cosas que en la ciudad pues no pasan porque corres y tienes un carro, una bocina que te mata los oídos.”

³¹ “Estos chicos vienen dotados de una capacidad aeróbica importante. Pero si están dotado de una capacidad aeróbica creo que es porque nacen en condiciones sociales bien difíciles donde hay que imponerse a tantas adversidades y entonces creo que por la sistematicidad va logrando una capacidad propia del mismo trabajo que hacen en el campo como del mismo trabajo que hacen en- a trasladarse- por las largas distancias que hacen a trasladarse a esos colegios. Anka cuenta que cuando tenia seis años ya iba a la escuela con su mochila y caminaba una hora. Sin saberlo prácticamente estaba haciendo un entrenamiento.”

³² Consider, for example, the use of Spanish loan words drawn from athletic training registers in Quechua narratives, which foreground the scientific recruitment protocols with which scouts scour for walkers in the countryside:

<i>Paykunaqa chay pinsimientoyuq kanku, ‘y chaymanta purinku’- chayqa paykuna pensanku mas resistenciayuq kanku mas pulmoniyuq kanku nispa mashkaq rinku Pachata Sonqota.</i>
“Ellos tienen ese pensamiento, ‘y por eso andan’ - por eso creen que tienen mas resistencia , mas pulmón dicen, van a buscar por Pacha y Sonqo.”
“They have that thinking, ‘so they walk’ - so they think they have more endurance , more lungs they say, they go to search in Pacha and Sonqo.”

Spanish loanwords and recruitment protocols represented in Quechua interviews.

Consider also athlete attributions of talent to the purportedly “natural” nutrition of rural provinces:

<i>Nawpaq mikhuq kayku mana aychata mikhukchu kayku tanto y mikhuq kaykunallata cereales andinos y llataq mikhuq kayku. Mikhuq kayku natural.</i>
“Antes no solhamos comer carne tanto, cereales Andinos soliamos comer, las comidas del pueblo. Soliamos comer natural .”
“Before we didn’t regularly eat meat so much, we ate Andean cereals, and we ate the foods of the village. We used to eat naturally .”

³³ “Marcó la diferencia para que yo tenga resultados, porque el resto, tenia entendido que ya trabajaban, con su professor de educacion fisica, habian clubes de atletismo en Sonqo en Pacha. Pero en el caso mío era natural, era don, era algo que me habia dado dios mismo para explotarlo.”

³⁴ “El otro es el trabajo que de muy pequeño tienen que hacer en el campo. Tienen que ayudar a trabajar, a pastorear, a trabajar en las papas, diferentes actividades que hacen que esa coraza que van formando de voluntad, de esfuerzo, de sacrificio todos los días, es la diferencia con el chico de la ciudad. ¿Que va a haber con el chico de la ciudad? El internet. El bus para ir a la escuela. O sino el papa lo lleva en su carro a la escuela. O sino los

juegos, el celular todo el día. Y esos niños no ven nada de esas cosas.”

³⁵ “Los jóvenes se van acomodando un poco más en esas comunidades tan distantes de acá. ¿Que ha pasado? En muchos lugares, por ejemplo en Pacha, y Sonqo, la minería se ha ido desarrollando tanto, entonces el nivel de vida un poco ha mejorado. ¿Que hacen los papas? Pues comprar la moto, o comprar la bicicleta. Entonces ya el chico no se traslada una hora, una hora y media dos horas como lo hacía quizás ocho diez años atrás, sino que ahora vayan en sus motos, lleva su hermano, o van en bicicleta, van buscando otra forma de ir aliviando las dificultades.”

³⁶ “No dejan de haber chicos hoy que todavía continúan en lugares recontrá trincados que no hemos ni llegado, por a veces las condiciones, por el tiempo. ¿Y no habrán? Tienen que haber. Yo a veces digo, yo pienso que en la región de Cusco tiene que haber cinco Anka. ¿Por que no pueden haber cinco Anka en la región de Cusco? Y si encontrarán a cinco Anka estoy convencido de que el atletismo dieran un salto enorme. Porque pueden haber cinco Anka, y pueden haber cinco Nina, y cinco Phawaq, y cinco Hauyra, pero no hemos podido llegar a todos los rincones más apartados por la geografía más difícil.”

Chapter 3 : Prospecting Potential

3.1 Introductory Vignette: A Recruitment Trial in the Countryside of Cusco



Figure 3-1: Preparations for a recruitment trial in the countryside

4000 meters above sea level the sky is just out of reach. Herds of sheep loiter atop pockmarked mountain peaks. Below the surface, copper mining ransacks terrestrial intestines. Distant specks resolve into walking bodies headed to harvest. You can go hours without crossing paths with another person out here. At 8am Julio is measuring the cone perimeter he's laid around a tract of runnable terrain. Soon, the one-kilometer test will commence in the village of

Wasi, a few days out from Cusco's urban hub. After weeks ambling at the precipice of one mountain after another, Julio has arrived to verify new talents.

Scores of high schoolers fall into rhythm, weaving between rocks and animal tracks. Local physical education instructors assemble by the start line, preparing their athletes for the task. By the time Julio begins the trial the sun has perched directly atop us. Clouds that covered the field in the morning line the horizon now; nothing shields us from the heat. Julio clutches the stopwatch strung around his sunburnt neck. His thumb hovers over the start button. He launches every trial with the same throaty exclamation in every village, province after province.

“Ready?!”

His shouts ricochet off boulders down into valleys below. Then, a split second of silence as juvenile muscles tighten in anticipation of their feat. Discerning eyes survey the pack readying itself to take flight. The boy we have come all this way to see grips the dirt with his toes.

“GO!”

They leap in urgent bounds, staccato pitter-patters of bare feet lapping one thousand meters of high land. In one village after another they dash by the cones, running like they've been running for most of their young lives, this time not between the school and their homes, but in circles and under the gaze of a foreigner with a stopwatch. Julio has come to find the best endurance running prospects in the department of Cusco. He is here to discover talent for the Sports Institute, let manifest in action what already exists, intangible but possible. Prospects are here, he says, like copper below the surface.

Five months ago, today's leader handily won the five kilometers flat event at the regional track-and-field school championship in Cusco, prompting Julio's follow up visit to the boy's natal home. Here, his pacing is wise. He saves a sprint for the final lap to secure the best mark of

the entire province. But no one anticipates that the next best time be made in the same trial, and only a few seconds behind the first. Chaki swoops into second place to everyone's surprise. The tallest boy in *Wasi*, lean and fibrous, he runs upright just the way Julio coaches residents in the training center to do.

When the trial has ended, winded kids assembled in single file mutter their names and birth years to Julio between breaths while he scribbles onto wrinkled pages that flap in the breeze. Back in the lunchroom, on ground wet with spilt *chicha* and covered with lunchtime cornhusks, Julio will advocate for the top prospects to travel to and compete at Cusco's cross-country championship. Soon, today's top two might be given official clearance from the Sports Institute headquarters to enter the Performance Center.

Descending from the hills of *Wasi* Julio is ecstatic. "*In the city we fish with a rod, in the countryside with a net!*," he proclaims. His catch was stupendous; multiple athletes from a single village with competitive marks that portend medal-winning performances. He just has to ensure they can make it to Cusco for the upcoming competition.

3.2 Sports Prospecting as Communicative Practice

Among the sports savvy, 'prospect' refers to a neophyte likely to succeed as a trained athlete, or as defined by the Peruvian Institute of Sport specifically, to those who "present sports training conditions and the biotype for national sport"² (IPD 2018 p. 434). Yet prospects envisioned but not actualized are no reward, and before actualization comes contact, the active endeavor to locate and channel conceived potential into perceivable forms. Today, the tendrils of global sports infrastructures snake into the nooks and crannies of national territories, wrapping around and extracting tomorrow's champions from every crevice. In the Andes, sports

prospectors and resource prospectors angling up mountainsides routinely cross paths³, each looking for glimmers of potential hidden from view. Converging on all sides at an endurance aptitude test organized in the heights of *Wasi*, talent scouts, physical education instructors, and eager children await the start signal with a shared nervousness, a restless anticipation of what may—or may not—be witnessed.

One manner to theorize the complex ways in which athletic prowess emerges as a detectable object upon which institutional resources can be spent—and towards which bureaucratic expertise can be directed—is to consider Julio’s travel a matter of “surfacing the body interior” (Taylor 2005). Surfacing “can mean giving something a surface (as in surfacing a road), but it can also mean coming to the surface (as when a submarine surfaces) or bringing something to the surface (as in mining when one brings gold to the surface by washing away soil deposits)” (p.742). Prospectors like Julio traverse vast distances in search of nascent champions, seeking geographical and communicative footholds from which to surface prizes still undiscovered. Julio leap frogs from city to village to retrieve altitudinal contenders, his aptitude test a “fishing rod” dropping its line into murky waters, a “net” cast below to maximize a yield. Julio’s recruitment *modus operandi*, phrased as a talent-abundant countryside versus a comparatively barren cityscape, draws attention to surfacing in several respects: surfacing talent from Peru’s vast rural interior, and surfacing physical potential from individuable bodies.

Crucially, his work is mediated by a third surfacing: on the one hand, a conversational networking that assembles communicative infrastructures of coaches and instructors, a latticework of talk within which purveyors of physical potential collaborate to locate and ensnare talents; on the other, the interactive work of rendering embodied surfaces during recruitment trials, of semiotically delineating sites where word and body can entangle before being shuttled

back to a point of refinement *i.e.* the training center. To provide an analytical framework for a theoretical focus on surfaces, I turn to linguistic anthropological engagements with phaticity. Drawing from Malinowski's notion of "phatic communion" (Malinowski 1923), Roman Jakobson's original formulation of the "phatic function" regarded language's capacity to bring people into monitored communicative exchanges⁴. His analytical focus was on channel checking in speech events: "messages primarily serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works ("Hello, do you hear me?"), to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention ("Are you listening?" or in Shakespearean diction, "Lend me your ears!"—and on the other end of the wire "Umhum!")" (Jakobson 1960: 355 *et passim*, see also 1990 on speech events and the functions of language in them). To make sense of Julio, returning euphoric to paved roads from *Wasi's* heights after alleviating his professional anxiety of securing medals in potentia, a broader understanding of the phatic function is called for, one that enables us to analyze infrastructures "as concrete semiotic and aesthetic vehicles oriented to addressees" (Larkin 2013 p.327) in particular.

Endeavoring to link the fruit of his labor to points further along a competition circuit in the wide-reaching capillaries of a global sports economy, Julio has established phatic contact with envisioned prospects, opened a communicative channel through which to surface budding talent and convey it deeper into the nexus of Peru's sports infrastructure. Phatic contact regards two processes in this case. First, "phatic experts" (Lemon 2013) like Julio locate prospects in collaboration with local physical education instructors in the countryside; they tap into local "networks of socialization" (Smith & Barad 2018) with the Peruvian Ministry of Education in order to send signs "across networks of experts and novices" which "presuppose or help to create the physical channels that connect these networks, thereby bringing into being some form of

contact across these participants” (p.387). Channels already constituted to socialize distant populations to national language and culture thus “begin to serve as infrastructure for new infrastructures,” (Elyachar 2010 p.460), as scaffolds for new webs of communicative relations within which circulate reports of the embodied gifts of Indigenous youth and the spatial coordinates for finding them. Second, phatic experts put prospects in contact with their own physical capacities via aptitude trials, tightly delimited speech events within which Indigenous bodies both “give” and “give off” signs (Goffman 1959) that elicit indexical interpretants of embodied capacities among wandering meta-semiotic laborers.

To ask how embodied behaviors are indexicalized (Lempert 2019) is to elucidate how interpreters come to construe them in existential contiguity to purported physical capacities. For if the body is always giving off signs—even if the signer is unaware or unconcerned—they only come to be habitually construed by interpreters as “object signs” (Agha 2007) in a broader meta-semiotic practice that typifies human movement according to some organizing logic. For example, “contact qualia” (Lemon 2013 p. 75)—the observable signs in communicative exchanges taken to reflexively signify (dis)attention to the character of contact itself—might be isolated to discern intentions or emotions hidden beneath a surface, for example a visage concealing lies that phatic experts might infer by attending to a twitch of the nose or an intensity to the eyes. Ideologies of contact purport “to distinguish flashes of ‘real’ reactions from signs that ‘mask’ emotions” (*ibid* p.76): liars knowingly conceal purportedly sincere, *i.e.*, “real,” emotional states, striving to keep them inaccessible to those who would probe. In such moment, detecting the purported divergence of speech and embodied action becomes a vocation, and embodied behavior can be perceived to undercut one’s attempts to mask internal states. Similar is the conversational therapy of psychoanalysis, wherein an analyst uncovers repressed meaning

hidden away in the psyche via the speech of the patient, a patient who is—per the theory—*unknowingly* repressing that which they cannot access without professional intervention (see for example Carr 2011). Those trained to identify what lies beneath the surface tug interactants along, sometimes to confession, sometimes to catharsis.

Insofar as infrastructures can be laminated upon one another, qualia can be *nested* in phatic or socializing networks, so this chapter aspires to link these two senses of contact: the embodied behaviors of contact qualia and the socio-geographies of their distribution. It pays close attention to how national infrastructures are mobilized to detect and coax talent from the countryside into the open, engaging “local complexities surrounding technologies of extraction and localization: the trouble of capturing a material that is not yet there or might even never be there” (Onneweer 2014 p.96). In my account of *nested phaticity*—the communicative grids within which corporeal phenomena are contacted and valorized by meta-communicative laborers—I spotlight how “surfaces” are materially enacted in everyday encounters, linking built infrastructures to semiotic channeling (Larkin 2008) that constitutes bodies as evolving social and political objects in a “political economy of movement” (Elyachar 2011).

I begin by examining the Ministry of Education’s national sports infrastructure, which is organized to pull competitors into regional track-and-field circuits for observation, largely through urban sports development programs. In Peru, a nation state that aspires to modern signs of political recognition in the representational economy of organized sport (Keane 20003), bureaucratic success is gauged according to socially enregistered emblems of success—*e.g.*, medals won, new talents identified, Olympians registered—which can be infixed as graphic artifacts (Hull 2012) in official reports. But according to scouts, this results-driven organization mismatches Cusco’s underdeveloped (Escobar 1995) rural geography; the fetishization of

measurable, prestige forms of sports accomplishment pries open cracks through which fall rural talents from where concrete roads do not reach (Harvey 2010), who are unable to synchronize with urban sports formation protocols already developed in territorialized “state spaces” (Harvey 2012).

Providing a coach’s-eye account of the infrastructural segregation of urban and rural populations, I foreground phatic anxieties about the bureaucratization of talent, fears of losing contact with potential medal-contenders due to cumbersome regulations and transport infrastructures prone to breakdown. Knowing in their own estimation what the cultivation of talent entails yet concerned nonetheless about producing champions and guaranteeing their own employment, coaches funnel high-altitude prospects into the national sports bureaucracy with a two-pronged approach. Browsing national school games that draw in many competitors with minimal results, and launching countryside campaigns to target smaller populations but to far greater effect, coaches assemble a “technology for intuition” (Lemon 2018) to cleave a territory stretching horizontally and vertically into isolable units for more efficient management, collapsing disparate spaces into a conversational flow that relays “stray interpretants” (*ibid* p.29)—flashes of potential glimpsed by instructors—between phatic experts.

After discussing antagonisms internal to the Sports bureaucracy, I return to the countryside to track how scouts semiotically precipitate ‘talent’ using “para-phenomenological” (Downey 2008, 2015) scaffolds, which channel a purported embodied capacity to the surface for observation, measurement, and ultimately recruitment. Quechua youth who do not aspire to conceal their potential, and scouts hoping to surface it from below a threshold of awareness, participate in fitness tests to materialize talent as an actionable social reality. As “traveling technologies” (Schnitzler 2013) tests aspire to “linearize” the running prowess of the

competitors, that is, “disentangle phenomena by breaking them into variables that can be arranged linearly to make numbers” (Roberts 2017, p.595), numbers which can be compared with one another across time and space. Their attempts to fashion a standardized one-kilometer distance for recruitment tests are therefore a mode of techno-political “entextualization” (Silverstein & Urban 1996), which laminates a portable “contextual configuration” (Goodwin 2000) upon the countryside within which overlapping semiotic fields can be probed. Drawing from archival, interview, and video-recorded data of recruitment missions, I analyze the communicative, corporeal, and infrastructural obstacles Quechua children and talent scouts face in their attempts to translate potential into scientifically measurable forms (Latour 1993). As Quechua youth in the rural hinterlands have little to no formal training, enregistering their potential is no easy task, prompting on-the-ground strategies to provide answers to the question of how one can make somebody, “that is, someone's body, understand how it can correct its movement” (Bourdieu 1988 p.160). Communicatively stitching together an embodied potential and threading it through an opening in a recruitment infrastructure, coaches shuttle new prospects to qualifying competitions so that they might insert themselves into the thick of the national apparatus.

3.3 Bureaucratizing the Competitive Gap Between Peru and Peer Nations



Figure 3-2: National coaches convene to assess talent in Cusco

Standing cross-armed with clipboards and stopwatches, surveying the track from the base of the bleachers overhead, mingle legions of physical education instructors from the jungles of *Moquegua* to the shores of Lake *Titicaca*. Dry sun beats upon spectators who crowd the tribune of the performance center, seeking refuge under makeshift tents and umbrellas. The air above them is blurry, a curtain of heat that billows with the breeze. Instructors from across southern Peru have assembled at the compound for the regional trials of the National School Sports Games. Eager athletes loiter in anticipation on the asphalt, alternately standing on one leg then the other, smacking quadriceps with open palms as they pace. Certified officials prepare hurdles and calibrate the finish line camera.

“¡Phaway! ¡Phaway! ¡Phaway!”

Quechua cries pepper roars from the crowd, which envelop little Killa as she turns the corner into the last eighty meters of the women's under-14 three kilometers flat final. Barefoot and short at twelve years of age, she passes older, taller, shoe-clad peers, many still finishing their penultimate lap.

"Strange, right?" asks Tomas, the technical director. He smiles without looking away from the track, his chin crinkled onto folded arms that rest shoulder height on a concrete ledge beneath the bleachers, the two of us hidden from the sun in the cool of the shadows. Killa's technique is *"wrong"*, he notes; arms akimbo, feet out of line, torso thrust ahead, like a drunkard tumbling forward but never hitting the ground, accelerating into a rapid descent that never ends.

"With everything!" shout Killa's school mates.

Huayra watches with us, not in any hurry to get to university classes on a Saturday morning. She leans against the concrete ledge while stretching her calves, her forefoot placed vertically against the wall, heel pushing into the pavement behind it, alternate leg staggered back for leverage, her eyes tracking Killa on the straightaway. Huayra began to trek daily from her village to school by age six, one hour to arrive, another to return. Some days she raced neighbors back, barefoot like Killa in front of her, to keep her shoes from being caked in mountain mud. At twelve years old she entered the district-level competition for the first time and qualified for the provincial trials in the 200-meter dash. Having packed a bag for the journey, she unknowingly left her national identification card in the pocket of her school backpack at home. Unable to identify herself at the registration table, officials turned her away from the competition.

One year later, she accompanied a cousin to the district games again for the 200-meter dash, though she did not place. *"I said: this year will be the last that I run⁵,"* she remembers, but in a serendipitous twist, her cousin would forget her own identification card, leaving Huayra a

chance to register for the two-kilometer event in her place. Huayra won, making it back to the trials where she had been turned away one year prior. This time, she placed first to qualify for the regional championship.

“I started without warming up. My professor screamed to me from a corner, he said: Run! Run! Run! And so I ran, dead or alive⁶.” Buoyed like Killa by cries from the crowd, Huayra won a bronze medal, losing only to two athletes living in the center in Cusco. *“We got to the final hundred, around there, I was almost first, but they beat me in the final sprint. Rumi jockeyed with Yachay, the two finished almost together. I was left behind because I wasn’t fast⁷.”*

Killa crosses the finish line with no one at her heels, which elicits beaming smiles from Julio atop the bleachers and Huayra underneath him. Julio nods in approval above as he scribbles Killa’s name and time, networking with the physical education instructors from her school, who invite him to visit during his upcoming recruitment mission. If Killa can win at the Cusco cross-country invitational in late December she will secure a spot to compete in the national championship in Lima. Julio is convinced that she can secure a medal in that national championship, and with it virtually guarantee entrance into the performance center by satisfying the Sports Institute’s new entrance criteria.

After seeing Huayra race closely against his trainees years prior, Julio invited her to speak to him after the awards ceremony. But Huayra didn’t find Julio, instead leaving unannounced to return home with her medal. Julio pursued, arriving shortly thereafter to her schoolhouse to invite her to Cusco, where she would repeat her performance in front of the full technical team. By age thirteen, Huayra would live and train in the compound full-time. Six years later, a decorated star watching new prospects follow in her steps from the shade, Huayra would travel internationally to hemispheric competitions, a cosmopolitanism afforded by chance.

“If my cousin had brought her DNI, I would have never participated there⁸.”



Killa, like Huayra before her, is one of few, a special talent sorted from countless others deemed unfit for long-term cultivation. Yet her running success is hardly an individual accomplishment. Killa pursues her spirit of sport while she in turn is pursued by experts in a burgeoning sports infrastructure. Her trajectory crosses a nexus of intersecting institutions within which her embodied potential might be intercepted and conveyed to the various nodes of the Sports Institute’s national apparatus. Since coming into early success and accumulating medals nationally and internationally, the Performance Center in Cusco is one such node which has probed for new athletes, principally through the dragnet of the *National School Sports Games*⁹. Public school children in Peru are eligible to compete in school games, track-and-field competitions divided by age and gender and held at the district, provincial, and regional levels progressively throughout the academic year. Fewer and fewer top contenders at each stage secure bids to the increasingly competitive events, until finally arriving to the national championship where they can qualify for Peru’s delegation to the ‘*South American School Games*¹⁰’. Hosting rights for the continental championships are delegated by members of the ‘*South American Sports Council*¹¹’, which formed the games in 1991 to “fortify the bonds of friendship and the acceptance of different customs and social practices through sport¹²” (CONSUDE 2021). At every stage, national talents concentrate more densely, falling under the observation of Sports Institute coaches who have a chance to evaluate them as they progress to the international arena.



Figure 3-3: Final team of 149 Peruvian athletes to the 2016 South American Games in Colombia

(Source: Memoria Anual IPD 2016 p.55)

It is the explicit task of the Sports Institute and coaches in the Performance Center to identify and develop these special talents, and to that end all look to Peru’s national population as a reservoir from which to fish for champions. For coaches in the performance center, however, developing Peru’s sporting future is a daunting task when gauging national success in sporting endeavors across the hemisphere. Shortly after returning from the Pan-American U-20 track-and-field championships, held in 2017 in Trujillo, Peru, head coach Idalberto and the attending sports psychologist Daniel spend time reflecting on what they encountered at the event, ruminating daily on the strength of the delegations from the United States and Canada in particular:

Daniel: *Es increíble, o sea, nos llevan años de adelanto. O sea, no es solo económico, ayuda bastante*

It’s incredible, I mean, **they’re years ahead of us.** I mean, it’s not just economics, that helps a lot but there are

*pero hay otras cosas que les han permitido ya con **el tiempo** tener todo.*

other things that have allowed them to have it all **with time**.

Idalberto: *Es la **infraestructura**, el proceso, también apoyan las **empresas privadas**. Y ahora dime tu, de 30 millones a 300 millones?!*

It's the **infrastructure**, the process, also **private companies** help. And so you tell me, from 30 million to 300 million?!

They frame their predicament along two lines. First, with respect to the development of a robust sports recruitment system, something both esteem of the United States, a country that “with time” has excelled “years ahead” of Peru according to Daniel, empowered by “infrastructure” and “private investment” according to Idalberto. Second, with respect to the country’s population, one of the biggest hurdles in developing Peru’s robust sports culture. As each made clear, with only thirty million inhabitants, Peru pales in comparison to the many hundreds of millions in the United States, a territory which in their eyes must therefore be teeming with potential stars.

These axes of comparison—a diachronic evaluation of the trajectory of talent cultivation in Peru compared to peer countries, and a synchronic evaluation of the population-level resources with which to construct that future in Peru compared to much larger nations—organize assessments of long-term growth throughout the Sports Institute. The preoccupations are borne out at international competitions; despite a strong showing on its own terms, Peru’s success at the Pan-American championships of which Daniel and Idalberto spoke was overshadowed by the medal counts of its peer nations.

As each makes clear, the discrepancy raises the conundrum of how to catch up to peer nations “years ahead,” how to effectively close a competitive gap by maximizing the resources at hand. The refrain of coaches on the track in Cusco (and across the country) is therefore constant: “we must move forward with what we have,” (*hay que seguir adelante con lo que tenemos*), “we

must continue with what there is,” (*hay que seguir con lo que hay*). Yet despite poignant determination, the fixation on moving forward creates several antagonisms between Sports Institute bureaucrats in the national head quarters and coaches in Cusco’s Performance Center.

XIX PANAMERICAN U20 TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS - 7/21/2017 to 7/23/2017
TRUJILLO, PERU
Chan Chan Stadium
Medal Count
Combined: Male + Female

Team	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
United States of America	22	14	18	54
Canada	6	9	7	22
Cuba	4	3	0	7
Mexico	2	5	0	7
Ecuador	2	1	3	6
Colombia	2	1	0	3
Jamaica	1	5	1	7
Brazil	1	3	5	9
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	2
Trinidad & Tobago	1	0	3	4
Chile	1	0	1	2
Cayman Islands	1	0	0	1
St. Kitts & Nevis	0	1	0	1
El Salvador	0	1	0	1
Peru	0	0	5	5
Bahamas	0	0	1	1

Figure 3-4: Total Medal Count of nations that secured at least one medal at the U20 Pan-Am track-and-field championship

(Source: NACAC 2017)

The Sports Institute is, in the end, a governmental bureaucracy susceptible to swings in public opinion and dependent on taxpayer dollars, always on the hook for results that justify its mission and provide tangible evidence of its success and competence. Thus, an increasing fixation over the last decades on “authoritative virtual models” (Agha 2007) of success— *e.g.*, graphic artifacts that materialize accomplishment like registered records, national talent databases, and Olympic competition classifications, as well more perduring artifacts like medals and brick-and-mortar sports installations (see below)—has put downwards pressure on coaches,

all of whom are looking for medal-contending talents yet privilege different mechanisms and geographic spaces for detecting and corralling them, for evaluating “what there is” in the first place (see chapter one). These discrepancies set the stage for a struggle over how to incorporate certain segments of the population into the national sports apparatus to the exclusion of others, a tension regarding the increased bureaucratization of talent recruitment.



Figure 3-5: Quantifiable emblems of national sports success relayed in yearly progress reports to general public (Source: Memoria Anual IPD 2016)

When the performance center began to operate in Cusco in 2008, the Sports Institute would approve an admission offer to a new athlete with little to no resistance, so long as coaches vouched for their potential, that is, provided expert meta-communicative judgments of talent yet-to-be realized. Athletes in the performance center with no experience on the asphalt but lifetimes of experience on the winding circuits of mountain paths quickly made up more than fifty percent of the national cross-country team, and from one moment to next, “where there were no results,

there began to appear results. Suddenly Cusco took off with medals at the national and international level¹³,” remembers Julio of the center’s beginnings. Cusco’s medal count surged, drawing attention from those in the Sports Institute headquarters, who over the years began tightening entrance requirements for new recruits, enumerated in a periodically issued and updated *Manual for Methodological Indications* (IPD 2018).

Of particular importance in that text are guidelines for evaluating eligibility that stipulate official competition success: new recruits *must* be classified in the national sports data registry as *Qualified Elite Athletes (Deportista Calificado de Alto Nivel, DECAN)* or, minimally, *Qualified Athletes (Deportista Calificado, DC; see IPD classification requirements for Performance Center candidate recruits, IPD 2018 p.35)*. Given the classification requirements, any recruit auditioning for a place on the roster in the Performance Center must have already medalled at a competition of national, if not international, import, official competitions meeting minimum requirements for co-competitors and managed by sanctioned national arms of international sporting federations.

III. DESCRIPCIÓN DE LAS CATEGORÍAS - REQUISITOS

DEPORTISTA CALIFICADO DE ALTO NIVEL- DECAN

- Estar afiliado a un club reconocido y con vigencia deportiva actual por la Federación Deportiva Nacional y RENADE.
- Estar registrado y actualizado en el Sistema Integral Deportivo Nacional (SISDENNA) de la DINADAF.
- Su resultado deportivo Internacional (entiéndase por medalla de oro, plata o bronce) debe de haberse realizado en eventos oficiales del calendario deportivo de la Federación Nacional o Internacional, Circuito Olímpico, además debe considerarse que la cantidad de países participantes incluido Perú sea mayor o igual a 5 países (el resultado tendrá una duración de 12 meses, en caso que el deportista no obtenga resultados en este margen de tiempo, automáticamente pasará al nivel DC por 12 meses; de no obtener algún resultado que valide la categoría pasará de ser DC a DA).

Figure 3-6: IPD criteria for classification as "Elite Qualified Athlete"

(Source: *IPD 2018 p.14*)

DEPORTISTA CALIFICADO – DC

- Deportista con resultados a nivel nacional por categoría de edades (entiéndase por medalla de oro, plata o bronce).
- Para que los resultados tengan validez como DC, al menos en la competencia deben haber participado 05 Equipos y/o Deportistas.
- Deportista que integra la Selección Nacional y participa en eventos internacionales oficiales del Circuito Olímpico.
- El Deportista que reciba una sanción a nivel nacional no podrá ser considerado DC y perderá la misma.
- El resultado tendrá una duración de 12 meses, en caso que el deportista no obtenga algún logro deportivo en este margen de tiempo, perderá la denominación de DC.

Figure 3-7: IPD criteria for classification as "Qualified Athlete"

(Source: IPD 2018 p.15)

Not only must the accomplishments be submitted as a sports C.V. with relevant prognostications for future success, but applicants must also maintain their classification during the selection process itself: inactivity or lackluster results over a twelve-month period result in reclassification at lower tiers of the hierarchy and, thus, dismissal from the applicant pool for prospects and the stripping of benefits and stipends—or even expulsion from the center—for current residents.

Taken at face value, the requirement might appear reasonable, even rigorous: the Sports Institute wants vetted competitors applying to and qualifying for spots in the chain of top-tier training centers, not an interminable number of applicants without any measurable competitive success to boast. However, these protocols presume a reality that coaches in the Performance Center vehemently rebuke: first, they assume competition winners are the best candidates to be found, and second, they assume universal and equal access to the national competition infrastructure among Peru's citizenry. Both assumptions irritate coaches on the ground to no end, who deplore "*such rigidity in a process that has demonstrated over the years that it is not necessary*"¹⁴, its increasing focus on mechanical objectivity to the exclusion of their semiotic expertise, that is, their capacity to envision the future success of new competitors from the countryside, ones without decorated sports resumes.

CUADRO 14

Número de medallas obtenidas en competencias nacionales e internacionales

Eventos Deportivos	Cantidad de Medallas			
	Oro	Plata	Bronce	Total
Eventos Nacionales	209	130	80	419
Eventos Internacionales	61	49	66	176
Total	270	179	146	595

Fuente: Dirección Nacional de Deporte Afiliado
Elaboración: Unidad de Planeamiento

CUADRO 15

Distribución de los deportistas beneficiarios, por CEAR

N°	Regiones	N° Participantes
1	Arequipa	39
2	Cusco	22
3	Ica	18
4	Junín	29
5	Lambayeque	31
6	Loreto	27
Total		166

Fuente: Dirección Nacional de Deporte Afiliado
Elaboración: Unidad de Planeamiento

Table 3-1: Yearly medal count and total resident athlete population in Performance Centers

(Source: IPD 2016 p.69)

These antagonisms play out in deliberations over new recruits at quarterly administrative meetings in the Performance Center. Because urban athletes have access to the competitive infrastructure of the track-and-field federation largely concentrated in urban hubs, they can build sports resumes that garner attention from Sports Institute bureaucrats and satisfy the codified entrance requirements of the Performance Center. Yet when the technical director proposes decorated candidates from the urban center of Cusco, the coaching staff immediately expresses suspicions of their results. They protest, claiming that the accomplishments are hollow because they take relative victories over absolute metrics, that is, they overestimate potential because of wins in purportedly low-rate international competitions, for example the Sports Games of Trans-

Andean Youth¹⁵. Taking a win at a competition organized for adolescents of the Andean Republics as a “*measuring parameter so that an athlete enters the CEAR*” (*parámetro medidor para que un atleta entre al CEAR*) is, in Idalberto’s estimation, “a total absurdity” (*un absurdo total*). “Track and field is **time** and **mark**,” he proclaims, and “*if there is no time and mark, that’s that. That’s super clear*¹⁶.” Although candidate athletes may have medalled internationally, their competition marks often fall short of the standards coaches expect, and for coaches, this disregard of promising numbers from rural youth who have not accessed urban competitions to build their sports C.V.s “*goes against the progress, the continuity of sport*¹⁷” itself.

3.4 Switching Communicative Channels Between Recruitment Infrastructures

Equally frustrating are the Institute’s mechanisms for equipping nascent talents with the skills they need to obtain medals en route to residence at the performance center. Consider a web of “massification” (*masificación*) programs to identify and develop contenders from age five and up for elite competition, the ‘Regional Sports Formation Program¹⁸’ (IPD 2016 p.63, see below) which the Institute touts as an intermediary point for thousands of new candidates—432 in Cusco specifically during 2016 (*ibid*, figure 12)—to acquire requisite experience and results. Because of the Sports Institute’s more demanding entrance protocol the staff has accepted a few new athletes funneled through these channels over recent years¹⁹, yet for coaches the system fails them for several reasons. Non-residential, and generally scheduled after regular-day school hours, the programs cull athletes who live in or especially close to urban hubs, the only reliable participants as there are no such programs located deeper in the provinces. According to Julio, Lima’s centralist fixation “on an immediate result” (*en un resultado inmediato*) foments a

geographical exclusion that amounts to self-sabotage, for if indeed new recruits are expected to train in such programs initially before formally entering the center, the daily commute athletes from the countryside like Huayra, Anka, and Killa would be expected to take are beyond vast; “*in our reality in Cusco,*” he laments, “*it’s practically impossible*²⁰.”

The formative infrastructure thus indexes a clear ignorance of—if not disregard for—highland geography and the reality of the distribution of the population between urban hub and rural hinterlands. For the technical director, this disparity in knowledge of geographical movement patterns in the Cusco area threatens recruitment of more distant talents:

*“This reality isn’t known. The great distances aren’t known, the difference of accessibility there is in these communities, in these districts, these annexes. In some manner we ignore that these kids exist, that these places exist. We believe everything is Cusco, Cusco, Cusco, or that those kids can arrive to Cusco on a moment’s notice and in that way train in already established programs. In reality this is **off the program, off the plan**²¹.”*

In his geographical assessment of talent pockets “off” the map and out the purview of the plan, not in the reach of the extant infrastructure, the director draws attention to the most burning question for all in the Sports Institute: “how many talents will have been lost” (*¿cuantos talentos habrán perdido*)? How many will have fallen through the cracks of the recruitment infrastructure, with no training programs to detect them, no one to intercept and draw them to the surface for observation?



Figure 3-8: Sports Institute annual talent detection statistics

(Source: IPD 2016 p.63)

Even the competition infrastructure of the Ministry of Education itself, which purports to concentrate as many talents as possible, is susceptible to logistical problems, for example a prolonged strike among teachers in the Ministry of Education in 2017 that both delayed the school games for months and severely dwindled the number of competitors. In the estimation of coaches, there are plenty who simply do not arrive to the *juegos escolares* because “*there are no professors in all the schools who even teach physical education,*” or because “*there is no one who prepares a kid even to take them to the school games, not even the first phase*”²². There may be no money for bus fare, or parents may not give their children permission, or, most disheartening, local physical education instructors may not prepare them; in sum, perhaps “*more than fifty percent of the athletes in the age category of thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen do not participate*”²³ as coaches claim, because infrastructural underdevelopment continues to bar large swaths of Peru’s rural peasantry from participating in and for the nation.

Because of uneven access to formal competitions, results among urban competitors are heavily skewed upwards precisely because they were *not* evaluated alongside those from the countryside. For Julio, rural populations with even minimal formal training quickly outperform trained urbanites who succeed at the games:

“We now have kids in the CAR itself that upon competing with kids who come from the countryside, well, in spite of having a systematic training during a year or two years even three years nevertheless with two or three days practically the kids that come from the countryside are beating them, which is clear, I believe, that the investment has to be in the realm of seeking these talents, that they aren’t lost, not in preparing kids that may very well not have this greater capacity.”²⁴

This “greater capacity,” a purported advantage deriving from an *ipso facto* high-altitude conditioning based in rural agrarian rhythms and commuting is how coaches, in contradistinction to bureaucrats, approach the problem of closing the performance gap between Peru and its peer nations. While the school games purport to sift the best competitors from the masses, they serve coaches in the center more than anything by bringing rural candidates—like Killa and Huayra—under their supervision, albeit temporarily, so they can pursue these future stars and others in the countryside on follow up missions or invite them to formal auditions at the center.

Lamenting halted countryside recruitment in favor of urban candidates and an ongoing strike that has clogged the faucet of talent in the school games, Julio proclaims that the regional sports program in Cusco is “falling behind” (*estamos quedados*), unable to muster new potential and guarantee future success, thereby echoing concerns shared by his colleagues who compared Peru’s sporting future to those of much larger and better equipped nations like the United States. Like Sports Institute bureaucrats who forge a sporting future from the present, coaches on the ground envision their relational standing to other geo-political entities vis-a-vis the embodied

cultivation of autochthonous resources. Rural populations are envisioned as the stepping-stones to the future of Peru's sports program, the fast track to overcome the competitive gap in which Peru has been left behind. The antagonism between urban administrators seeking fast results from medal-winning urban athletes²⁵, and coaches anticipating longer-term cultivation of rural youth porting these "greater capacities" is a contestation over how to best actualize Peru's latent potential, about how to achieve results. It is a contest to determine the infrastructures by which new talents are incorporated, a struggle over which population is selected to train for and represent the nation.

We might ask, therefore, whether it is coincidental that the logistical problems of talent recruitment in the Sports Institute recapitulates in near perfect correspondence a political history of discrimination in the Peruvian Andes. Consider the systematic exclusion of large segments of the rural Quechua population from urban competition infrastructures, their consequent inability to reliably amass official results and classify as DECAN or DC athletes, their difficulties meeting entrance requirements for the performance center²⁶; problems of access and credentials are not new for Quechua youth from the Andes. Coaching commentaries on Andean potential are therefore not only a meta-pragmatic stereotype about the relation between rural populations and their high-altitude environment, as discussed previously, but also a political critique regarding access to national infrastructure and the power of the coach in the sports bureaucracy to make up distance lost, a proposal to shift policy in order "*to capacitate the physical education instructors who are in those places, motivate them, give them some greater knowledge and incentivize them so that they too can obtain some benefit for the talents obtained*"²⁷," explains the director. In other words, theirs is not only a contest to determine the place of Quechua populations in the nation, but also a contest to decentralize a historically centralized polity.

If the Sports Institute envisions regional populations throughout the country as sports-specific talent pools, then coaches are responsible for wading through them, linking up the most attractive candidates with the recruitment infrastructure. Coaches sit at the interface, the contact zone, between the infrastructure and the materials it aspires to refine, like the points of needles stitching together the conditions of possibility for recruiting future stars. On the competition circuit they are consultants who try to solve problems that stymie the efficient and effective detection of these most attractive candidates. While a demand for “immediate results” has precipitated movement away from the judgments of coaches who see the future of undeveloped talents but need time to train them, nevertheless, coaches attest, *“in tests of endurance it is not like this. It is a long-term process and the greatest result that we could obtain comes after five, six years of preparation, even eight to ten years. And yes, all that seeking an immediate result in endurance tests is impossible²⁸.”*

Huayra’s story reveals the role of happenstance and chance in the process: would-be champions are only a forgotten identification card away from missing a competition, from disappearing from the view of onlooking coaches, from falling through the cracks of so many bureaucratic demands. *“All of a sudden these demands began, but we have not realized that all these kids began in this way and no other²⁹,”* says Julio. *“We have to return anew to the origin, not completely cut and change the system³⁰.”* In other words, new champions demand a return to concerted search missions, to the somatic geography of the countryside. Yet because a shifting somatic geography pushes talents further away, performance center staff must diverge from national channels in pursuit of new recruits by tapping into the networks they cultivate with instructors in more distal areas. Coaches and administrators align towards this future in

recruitment planning meetings during which they convene to plan their routes across the countryside.

Presiding over one such meeting, the technical director himself makes a pitch for journeying into the province of *Hanaq*:

“Locate yourself, towards Hanaq you have Puka, where there are very interesting people. From Puka you have even higher still, you have other communities, like, later you have Hanaq itself. Later you have Ankhas, from Ankhas you have Yana, that there are also people there who are uff. You have Qhosi, which is behind towards Oqe, there are also people there who have never come for even a school tournament, it’s far, eh. From there yes there are people too, because it’s almost the same altitude as Pacha, only that they never come, it’s far ...Also the other side over here by Yuraq. In the heights of Yuraq I once saw a national champion ...who was really the maximum in that moment. And I saw a twelve-year-old kid who had a chacarera, right? The competition starts and all, and the kid with the chacarera did it, I mean, he destroyed it.”³¹

Like the vehicles in which we will travel, his speech ascends from the valley of Cusco towards new heights, through the districts of *Hanaq*, to places so far from the urban hub of Cusco that residents “could never come for the local school tournaments.” A chain of stances links his geographic descriptions: positive evaluation of groups of people in relation to their environment. He traces the high-altitude landscape, populating it with characterological figures: Andean children running with bags around their shoulders, “destroying” their competition in the heights of distant mountains. This communicative differentiation of segments of the population generates characterological personae that invite recruitment resources, no longer for urban kids with medals, but for rural kids with talent untapped.

3.5 Making Contact Despite Obstructed Signals



Figure 3-9: Entering the provinces of Cusco

Through the perimeter fence that separates the training center from its urban surround. Past the soccer academy on the corner of the block. Past the National University, still calm in the dark before hurrying students flood its gates. Past the bakeries and Internet cafes and printing centers that line *Avenida de la Cultura* as it winds from *Magisterio* to *Marcavalle* then onto *Los Rosales*. Past the Andean University, into *Larapa* and then *San Jeronimo*, crossing the eastern edge of the city. Apartment buildings turn from sleek and modern to jagged and incomplete, paved roads to dirt, vertical development to single story homes. Past the wetlands of *Saylla*, the archaeological sites of *Tipón*, and the bread stands of *Oropesa*. Up and out of the valley, to whose side grips the ascending caravan, snaking its way between mountains less and less populated. Upwards, into thinner air above the glow of the illuminated grid, out to the provinces...

“And to where has my son travelled this year?”

Anka’s mother wears *u’sutas* just like he does, the black rubber of the soles dusted with particulates. Under the brim of her hat she squints, her dark wool sweater storing the heat of midday sunlight, her skirt rippling as she retreats with our plates back to the shoulder of the road. Thick braids of long black hair bounce against her scapulae as she leans to place the plastic discs inside her carrying bag. I steady a plastic funnel with my hands, pushing the nozzle into the neck of the fuel tube as Julio pours gasoline into it. The fuel sizzles where the stream contacts the funnel. Exploding bubbles coat my wrists in a thin sheen.

“Uganda. Argentina, Chile. Let’s see, where else...”

Julio’s face is flush against mine, the two of us contorted around the fuel inlet on the left side of the truck. Even amid this improvised refilling, five days into our journey through the mountains and moments after eating roadside with Anka’s mother—who awaited us with food in exchange for a report of her son’s travels—Julio’s eyes wander from the funnel to the hills around us. He is always anxiously surveying, formulating routes, inexorably concerned with “what lies beyond.” The nylon utility cords that tie the gasoline tanks down to the exposed bed of the truck crackle when stretched taut again, another emptied plastic shell added to the row.

Refueled and rumbling once more through peaks towards the village of *Raymi*, Julio reminisces of missions and mothers past. He raises one hand from the steering wheel to gesture towards the hills, where years ago he and Daniel were forced to abandon their vehicle and climb on foot, up to a small house in which lived a promising young girl who sat waiting to formalize her entrance to the center by clearing one final hurdle: an inked thumb print from her mother, who could not sign her name, was required on the dotted line of a Sports Institute commitment form. Her family’s house, small and unobtrusive, did not stand out against the ground upon

which it stood, causing Julio and Daniel some difficulty in determining which of the hills to ascend. Perhaps anticipating their hesitation, the young prospect carried a mirror from her house to the fields outside. Angling it against the sun, she bounced rays of light down the mountain into Julio's always-surveying eyes. Latching onto this signal—the reflected glimmer of a waiting potential—Julio and Daniel began their ascent to materialize her career, to collect the fingerprint and shuttle her back to the urban hub.



The challenge is stark: the population density of the provinces is low, and school-age youth are dispersed far and wide, clumping here and there into village clusters. An attempt to locate and evaluate each athlete at each of their homes would never succeed because there is too much ground and too few to cover it. Simply put, recruitment is obstructed: between rural troubles with accessing the Ministry of Education's competition infrastructure, and challenges effectively traversing the provincial territory, coaches must make a concerted effort to secure the "greater capacity" that is the object of their hunt. The issue is making contact, wading into the infrastructural channels within which to pursue it and the communicative channels within which to formally register it. The working strategy is therefore to find the places where talent pools, to encounter schools in a heaving sea of mountains, to get to as many as possible each morning of the week before classes let out and the students disperse, and at each location to deploy the net of which Julio speaks, to tow in the talents before hauling over hills to the next testing ground.

If the school games trawl youth before coaches in the Sports Institute, individual schools across the countryside are the points of contact for zeroing in on scattered glimmers of potential

that falls through the cracks of the education system. The dilemma, however, is that the overwhelming majority of the highland schools in which the recruitment caravan conducts its tests have little formal physical education to speak of. Consequently, coaches and scouts bemoan talents lost with no local instructor to identify their worth or advocate for them:

“Well, the truth is that if we were in each high school...a [physical education] professor who, or least in every district a professor who could support various high schools, the truth is the job would be much, much easier, right? And surely our largest deficits are precisely because this kind of professor is not in place, or because there isn't that enthusiasm from some professors or from some principals, and well, if that were what we saw across the region I believe that in Peru sporting results wouldn't simply double but rather multiply by a large factor, right? Because we wouldn't lose so many talents.”³²”

For coaches on the front lines of talent identification, if a proper infrastructure equipped local school instructors with the knowledge to socialize youth to the techniques of track and field, then Peru's sporting triumphs would exponentiate. Yet because most physical education instructors work on contract with the Ministry of Education, and therefore bounce between schools and provinces during shorter-term assignments, there is little incentive to invest time at individual schools, or to develop a long-term awareness of athletic talents among student bodies, as their relocation elsewhere is inevitable. Where one leaves another arrives, and knowledge of the best does not pass between them. In the absence of systematic and decentralized development, says Julio, *“the majority of these kids do not know what track and field is. Very different from what happens in Kenya or in Ethiopia, where so many are not lost, because everyone there wants to run, and they have the opportunity to show if they run or do not.”*³³

To complicate matters further, coaches worry that the students ultimately selected for their trials by the local instructors are assembled at random, because the instructors have next to no clue who among their students would shine. This uneven distribution of semiotic expertise,

between local instructors who cannot reliably identify the best and itinerant scouts with limited time to spend verifying in each location, causes anxiety about who has been missed, about an inability to surface the most promising prospects. In sum, the physical education instructors constitute a layer of communicative obstruction: they threaten to blur the signals of potential from as-of-yet undetected talents, that is, leave them unasccribed. If there is no ascription there can be no measurement, and without measurement there can be no registration in the Sports Institute's system.

To triangulate new talents and tease impressive performances from them therefore takes a cast of laborers, a phatic infrastructure that coaches mobilize from many directions simultaneously. First, in conversation with current athletes in the Performance Center, coaches reverse engineer communicative networks back to former instructors in the provinces. Because the vast majority of students in the countryside have heard nothing about the performance center in Cusco, current athletes consult with coaches to pinpoint new prospects, for example by describing friends or family members who used to compete with them closely in school races. A fully funded professional athlete in the Elite Performance Center, Nina has informed Julio of another girl who used to race neck and neck with her, recounting her own recruitment:

“The vice principal came and told me if I wanted to run, and I told them yes, no problem. “They have come from the CAR” he says, and I’m like “what’s the CAR?” I was saying. Alright, let’s go, we said. They take us out of class and we go to the test. I was first, my classmate was second, Warani. I had beat her, though before she had beat me in two kilometers I believe, in the competitions that there were in the school, that they made us do.”³⁴

A rising youth national champion, Nina, lay hidden in the mountains until Idalberto located her during a recruitment mission. Now, Julio has included *Raymi* in his route to suss Nina's friend

and any others that may be lying in wait as well. At Nina's behest, Julio stays in touch with physical education instructors in *Raymi*, like in many other villages, because it keeps him on the pulse of new talent when it is first identified on the ground; it also provides a channel for him to encourage the physical education instructors to stay diligent with their classes.

Laboring to maintain contact with the physical education instructors enables a nested contact with the potential in question, it mobilizes a social infrastructure of communicative channels to stay abreast of sporting developments, to open possibilities to register hidden talents. Whether by mingling with attending instructors at the school games to identify prospects who have arrived and performed well, or who may have not been able to travel at all; or by mingling during the recruitment missions in the provinces to learn about younger up-and-comers, coaches plug instructors into the national apparatus, a trans-geographical solidarity through a communicative division of labor: semiotic experts checking in with attachés in the field. Many local instructors with whom the Performance Center maintains contact relay with radio station leaders in Peru's rural network to broadcast announcements of the recruitment caravan's imminent arrival to regional schools as well. Listeners who would otherwise miss the trials make a point of attending and competing after hearing these signals bounce off mountainsides and into their homes in the early morning.

To manifest the "greater capacity" of rising talents in materially measurable ways upon arrival to each school, coaches enlist the local instructors to run candidates through physical tests. However, translating potential into observable behavior is no easy task, and all labor to provide optimal conditions for this potential to materialize. Consider the one-kilometer trial. For scouts, it is the most important recruitment tool because it is brief, allows them to observe many runners simultaneously, and, in theory, requires very few resources: a measuring wheel,

clipboards, stopwatches, and one thousand meters of runnable land. There are often very many kids to evaluate and little time to do so, and the simple test creates easy conditions for splitting large groups into manageable chunks divided by gender and age cohort. It must always be one thousand meters. The distance is standard, in accordance with the metric system of professional track and field competitions administered by the International Athletics Association Federation the world over. The trial, in theory, carves out a competition space-time for this decontextualized comparison from the material surround of each location, “*an evaluation with all of them together in the same conditions*”³⁵ says Julio, which in theory homogenizes otherwise disparate racing environments so children throughout the Andes can be evaluated against each other.



Figure 3-10: School children complete recruitment trials in full uniforms

Yet the material surround, in practice, hinders any attempt to standardize the space for cross-case comparisons. In almost every village it is impossible to find a tract of land large and uniform enough to run a single kilometer leg. Time after time, Julio retrieves his measuring

wheel and plots out the longest circuit in the neighboring fields he can find, then calculates the number of laps the kids will need to do to traverse the kilometer. But not all laps are created equal, Julio would explain, “*the conditions in which they have run are not always the same. Wind blows, less wind, the ground, the very angle of the curves*³⁶.” Each attempt to cleave a competition space-time from the countryside leaves material traces of the village in which the trial is conducted. We often work up a sweat clearing rocks from a makeshift track after marking the distance with cones, and despite these best efforts the occasional toe splits when a clambering foot stomps an unseen stone during the race. Different altitudes must be controlled for too; the ease with which a child runs at three thousand meters above sea level is not the same as at five thousand. And on any given day there is no guarantee that families will hear radio programming either, so students often arrive to class with no athletic gear. Sending them home to retrieve t-shirts and shorts is impractical when many live ten kilometers or more away. They have no option but to complete the trial wearing their school uniforms: cumbersome skirts, vests, and sweaters that weigh heavy, constraining movement. Taken together, these material obstacles jam the signals of potential, for one now must ask whether a lackluster performance was the chance consequence of sartorial encumbrances, strong winds, wet soil, or the inevitable result of an untalented competitor.

3.6 Embodied (In)Experience Troubles Cueing

When coaches arrive to the nodes of their phatic infrastructure, new kinds of contact become the focus of their attention. First, the way the feet of rural youth contact the ground upon which they run. In the Performance Center, athletes mostly train on the flat surface of the track with competition cleats.³⁷ But scouts on recruitment missions claim that rural Andean youth have

a distinct advantage over their urban peers in cross-country running specifically: the terrain of a cross-country circuit more closely resembles the paths of the daily commutes these children make between their homes and the school, they say. Where once the barefoot was tethered to racializing insults that equate rural Quechua populations with animals, scouts construe barefootedness as a competitive advantage in certain kinds of track-and-field events. The bare foot, in their view, recognizes and excels over dirt and gravel, intuits the angular nuances of the crests and troughs of undulating hills. As a revalorized object sign, the bare foot becomes the pivot point about which coaches link up disparate temporalities: the competition temporality of a results-driven Sports Institute which upholds strict entrance requirements for the training centers, and the labor temporality of rural lifestyles in the Andes³⁸. Recruiting in the countryside most heavily between October and December, coaches send top prospects to the regional cross-country championship held annually every December. A high rank in the regional championship secures a spot at nationals in April; medal there and the Performance Center's doors open wide.

To catch up to peer nations years ahead, coaches twist the agrarian rhythms and embodied habits of rural populations into recruitment results, thereby fast-tracking new candidates into the national sports apparatus. But for their gambit they stumble upon perhaps the most pernicious problem of all: new candidates' acquired, embodied preparedness for endurance running remains intangible because it cannot be mustered communicatively, cannot be made to materialize by those who arrive with limited time and resources to explain the mechanics of endurance running to the competitors. The youth who participate in the trials run daily, commuting between their homes and the schools. But running the trial is jarring in that the distance is not mapped by the landmarks of journeys between places, they explain. The price and the prize of the recruitment modality is the same: rural kids do so much walking and running, but

in such a manner as to stymie efforts to register it numerically with the test. Because most local instructors do not familiarize their students with the groove of distance running from an early age—neither the infrastructural groove of the track, nor the rhythmic groove of pacing and tempo—a talented youngster may slip through the cracks, for in the moment of her assessment she runs between cones, or runs too far from them, or her speed fluctuates too wildly between and within laps.

Puriq remembers well the jarring event. Before commencing his career as a professional athlete, he herded sheep with his father everyday after returning home from school, until a radio broadcast pulled him into the Sports Institute’s gravity:

- | | | |
|---------|---|--|
| Puriq: | <i>Escuchamos en radio ‘Reloj Solar’ que es en Qocha mismo, va a haber recién este mañana...Y esa vez me cambié pero ya no iba al colegio. Me he venido a Qocha corriendo, faltaba media hora entonces.</i> | We hear on the radio ‘Solar Watch’ that right in <i>Qocha</i> there’s going to be [a test] in the morning...And that time I dressed but I wasn’t going to school. I came to <i>Qocha</i> running, there was half an hour to go then. |
| Andrew: | <i>¿¿O sea ibas corriendo?! ¿¿A la prueba?!</i> | You mean you went <i>running</i> to the test?! |
| Puriq: | <i>¿Corriendo! me he venido así. Yo tampoco no sabia que es calentar, así es antes que nos recluten, ¿pero corriendo así, cómo me ves, caliente he llegado!</i> | Running! I came like that. And I didn’t know what it was to warm up, it’s like this before they recruit us, but running this way, like you see me [on the track], I arrived warmed up! |

So eager to participate in the Sports Institute’s one-kilometer recruitment test, Puriq ran from his family home to the test site in the urban hub of *Qocha*. *Ran*, entirely unconcerned with jeopardizing his test time by exhausting himself before the race began. Upon arrival he was met with groans from neighbors who knew him there for his inextinguishable smile and for his running prowess. “*They already knew that I was a runner from Qocha, so they were all afraid of me. I always won in the school games,*”³⁹ he says. And though unaware of how to properly warm

up as an athlete before being recruited into the Performance Center, he had, *ipso facto*, readied himself for the test in the act of scrambling to it, a happenstance warm-up Puriq has been trained to recognize in retrospect.

After formalities and the revelry of phatic communion in each location, Julio typically asks the staff and the physical education instructors to gather the best runners. From the moment the group assembles at the start line for their instructions, events are set in unstoppable motion and cannot be dependably reset. As much as coaches struggle to standardize the trial across contexts, it cannot be repeated under the same circumstances even at individual locations, for if the participants exhaust themselves on the first lap, they cannot reliably rest and reset. Because coaches depend on metrics and numbers to codify talent and request institutional resources with which to recruit new prospects into the national sports infrastructure, the stakes are palpably high: miscue the test and you may leave a village empty handed. Explaining things clearly to the children assembled at the start line, like Julio below, is therefore of the utmost importance:

*“Miren este control se esta hacienda a nivel de todo el departamento, ya paramos en Hanaq, Huk, en Iskay ahora estamos en Sonqo, vamos a seguir luego en Kimsa, Tawa, y Soqta, y Pacha. Entonces estamos buscando los atletas más talentosos de todo el departamento, en cada una de las edades. Ahora **no importa que corran con mayores también con los pequeños no importa porque a todos yo les voy a tomar su tiempo ya lo importante es el tiempo no es el puesto en el que llegan porque vamos a comparar por edades de todo el departamento desde el año 2005 hasta cualquier edad, si tienen 30 años también 30 años no importa ya...de todo el...de todo el departamento vamos a ver quienes son los mejores.**”*

“Look, this trial is being conducted throughout the entire department. We’ve already stopped in *Hanaq*, in *Huk*, in *Iskay*. Now we’re in *Sonqo*. We’re going to continue on to *Kimsa*, *Tawa*, and *Soqta*, and *Pacha*. So, we’re seeking the most talented athletes, in the entire department, of all ages. Right now **it doesn’t matter that the older students run with the little ones**. It doesn’t matter because I’m going to take everyone’s **time**, OK? **The time is important, not the place** in which you finish. Because we’re going to compare by age in the entire department. From [birth year] 2005 to any age...if you’re 30 years old well 30 years old it doesn’t matter...In the entire department we’re going to see who are the best.”

The idea proves frustratingly difficult to get across: to race against time, not your elder and younger peers beside you, not against flesh and blood competitors breathing down your neck but against yourself, in the shadow of all who have raced before you and in anticipation of all who will race after you. In this test you do not look over a shoulder to gauge the proximity of those behind you or push yourself solely to catch back up to older friends just in front of you, but instead pursue a personal best time, one weighted by chronological age.

Many cannot comprehend the mechanics of the test quickly enough to perform to their purported potential, cannot lock into the frame that Julio cues. They burn out in the opening two hundred meters, parting from the start line in full out sprints to get as far ahead of the others as possible, as if it were any other school race with which they have more experience. Bystanders on the sidelines encourage the drama, shouting to friends in the heat of the race to pass one another, but they elicit shouts of protest from Julio as those competitors hit the brick wall of insurmountable fatigue moments later, the fun of the event sucked out like the oxygen from their muscles. While competitive rivalries are productive pedagogical tools that coaches exploit to improve fitness in the Elite Performance Center, they require a learned awareness of one's individual limits and an understanding of the slow pace of long-term athletic development: junior athletes should be inspired by older ones, not discouraged when they cannot beat them. During recruitment, many begin the trial with smiles and end with pain-stricken faces. Some even faint. First, rocky obstacles on the track and stiff clothing get in the way, and then the athletes themselves get in their own way.

Puriq himself echoes these self assessments, laughing at his former self for being afraid to perform in public, for having no notion of “rhythm” in endurance running, for jockeying with his competitors instead of minding the clock to beat his own best time.

- Puriq: *En ese entonces tenias un nervio entrar al estadio ¿no? Y la gente que está alrededor del estadio, no sé, sentías un nervio que te, que te, sentías algo, mmm no sé...*
- Andrew: *¿Que? ¿Miedo?*
- Puriq: *Miedo, uh huh. Así. O sea, primera vez que entras pues a un público, porque yo no- nunca había corrido en público ¿no? Y era algo emocionante también, correr, algo que me empujaba también para correr más, más, y más. Y entre-peleamos pues, uno pasa el otro, el otro, en ese entonces ni siquiera sabia que era el ritmo. O sea un carrera así, a lo que nosotros salía.*
- In those times you had nervousness entering the track, right? And the people who are around the track, I don't know, you felt nervousness that, that, you felt something, mmm, I don't know...
- What? Fear?
- Fear, uh huh. Like that. I mean, the first time you enter a public [space], because I- had never run in public, right? It it was something emotional too, to run, something that also pushed me to run more, more, and more. And between- well we jockeyed, one passes the other, the other, in that time I didn't even know what rhythm was. I mean a race like this, whatever came out of us.

Having been socialized by coaches, Puriq the trained athlete now articulates the embodied groove of that long-distance running, recalling the inexpert jockeying of the race, the almost random result of the trial. But in his school days, when he might have been educated to recognize such things, “*the instructor couldn't care less,*” he recalls. “*All the running I did on my own*⁴⁰.”

Although most of the competitors run daily, they have not been socialized into communicative routines that regiment their pacing. For Julio, the problem ultimately derives from a dearth of experience: in the absence of close contact, their “brush” with formal training and competition, many of the youth in these recruitment missions are unable to regulate their output, unable to project their physical performance onto the distance of the cone perimeter. They are stymied by a fundamental mismatch between their embodied schemata and the demands of the test:

“As they've had no close contact with competition, they don't realize that...that there will be a moment in which, let's say the...the energy runs out, so there is...the energy runs out at that velocity and right, they don't know this, and they believe in that moment that

they're going to take off, they're going to be able to maintain that rhythm, and in reality no, it's not like that, because they haven't experienced it before⁴¹."

Thus, to identify individuals who can transition from one reflective engagement with their embodied experience to another involves painstaking labor, a communicative scaffolding of a new socio-proprioceptive awareness. Riddled with communicative blind spots, talent prospecting is shot through with a fundamental antagonism: between spontaneity and mystery on the one hand, and determinacy and measurement on the other.

Given the well-maintained track-and-field circuit at the school at *Raymi*, Julio anticipates another impressive performance if history holds, but it must be culled carefully. The local instructors aid Julio in overcoming the typical obstacles. They nod knowingly when asked to identify kids who will perform best in a resistance running test because they keep track of their students on an individual basis. They have taught them how to warm-up properly before the trial. Almost all the competitors arrive in sports gear, having been informed and prepared accordingly beforehand.



Figure 3-11: Organized warm-ups performed at Raymi school

The instructors are competent with the cueing of resistance running and reinforce Julio when he instructs the kids to stay close to the cone perimeter rather than waste time by distancing themselves from it, when he draws attention to the finish line on the far end of the improvised track.



Figure 3-12: Co-participatory boundary marking of the event

1.	Julio	<i>Ya muchachos ahora si dos vueltas y media ya</i> “Alright fellas here we go, two and a half laps OK?”	Final instructions before start signal.
2.		<i>A ver con todos</i> “Alright with everyone.”	
3.		<i>Ya sabéis que los que están allá se se meten</i> “You over there already know, you come in...”	
4.	PhysEd1	<i>Pegados a los conos</i> “Glued to the cones.”	
5.	Julio	<i>Pegados a los conos</i> “Glued to the cones.”	

This co-participatory readiness signals to Julio that the embodied potential of the participants might be more accessible. Multiply valent, the warm-up, the spatial awareness, and the

appropriate dress are taken up as runner-focal indexicals of preparedness and familiarity, instructor-focal indexicals of training knowledge and diligence. In retrospect, Julio explains: “we see that in that school there was a marked track, so it is notable that the physical education instructor, in some form, had worked beforehand, not to mention it is a school where great kids, talented kids have come from, like Nina.”⁴²

Despite the engagement of the local physical instructors, however, many still struggle to grasp the rhythm of the circuit. It is not enough to simply blow the starting whistle and wait. The seconds and kilometers with which coaches quantify performance are all well and good provided the competitors can adhere to the rhythm of these metrics. Julio and the physical education instructors shout cues, holding the runners publicly accountable for maintaining position in the trial, or for advancing, or for transitioning to the final lap. Yet particularly difficult for them is the command, *rematar*, the need to sprint the final lap, to empty the gas tank completely in a final dash to cement one’s place in the race or overtake the clock. To push through this pain, wearing a school uniform and no shoes, under harsh sun, with no water to drink and no lunch for another four hours, all for no immediate reward, is a hard-ask.



Figure 3-13: Communicative scaffolds for final sprint

1.	Julio	<i>Remata remata remata</i> “Finish! Finish! Finish!”	End sprint, coming around the bend
2.		<i>Remata remata</i> “Finish! Finish!”	
3.	PhysEd2	<i>Vamos rematando taytay!</i> “We’re finishing, my <i>father!</i> ”	Final straightaway
4.	Julio	<i>Remata remata remata</i> “Finish! Finish! Finish!”	
5.		<i>Llega llega llega llega llega</i> “Arrive! Arrive! Arrive! Arrive! Arrive!”	Finish line

Many in the Performance Center remember well the jarring experience of encountering this collision of body and cues for the first time in recruitment tests. Reflecting on his own trial experience, Puriq, describes changes in his pacing and the shouts those changes elicited from an onlooking scout during his recruitment one year prior:

- Puriq: *Y esa vez yo corrí, mil metros. Mi primera vez. Y cuando he corrido así q’ala pata he corrido, no, no así con, sin zapatilla. Siempre corríamos así q’ala pata en la escuela, ya costumbre de allí. Cuando corrimos el entrenador me ha gritado así: “¡Corre! ¡Corre mas! Aumenta.” Y yo mas aumento. Y cuando con como cien metros ya me demoré. Después me ha salido dos cuarenta y siete esa vez.*
- Andrew: *Es la mejor marca que se ha visto en esa prueba. En toda la historia tu la tienes.*
- Puriq: *Si. Después me dijeron en radio había hecho pasar que en Qocha está el mejor marca, mi nombre era.*
- And I ran that time, one kilometer. My first time. And when I ran, I ran barefoot, not, not like with, without shoes. We always ran barefoot like that in school, a custom from there. When we ran, the trainer screamed at me like this: “Run! Run more! Speed up.” And I sped up more. And when- with 100 meters I slowed down. After, I came out with two forty-seven that time.
- It’s the best mark that’s been seen in that test. Of all time, you have it.
- Yes. After they told me the radio had broadcast that the best mark is in *Qocha*, it was my name.

With a year of professional training under his belt, Puriq revisits his recruitment audition with the analytic knowledge of a coach, retracing his steps in the ‘there-and-then’ of his pre-recruitment days. He ran barefoot, he did not know how to warm up, and he did not know how to

sprint the final leg of his test, or *rematar*. His pacing was erratic: he sped up, only to slow down, all the while incurring increasingly frantic shouts from the onlooking scout.

In the final straightaway, the coaches call for the children to maintain pace. Language scaffolds movement from the sidelines: lexico-syntactic parallelism and register partials barked by scouts, cues fired in staccato triplets and quintuplets at the finish line, a surging crescendo of volume and urgency as exhausted youngsters push themselves to the end: each piece becomes a semiotic scaffold for the spatial configuration, a multi-modal laminate that segments space-time into discernible units (see chapter three). Reconvened anew around Julio and his clipboard, the huddle looks inwards from the outside, a collective wondering over what has just happened, what, if anything has materialized or manifested. As the embodied exertions of each gasping youth are translated into the strokes and loops of numbers inked on Sports Institute paperwork, talents—or their absence—are registered as social facts to be relayed further into the competition infrastructure.

This kinesthetic translation is the coordinated effort of communicative laborers who shepherd competitors through the test, precipitating a ritual text: from marking off the field of play, to the pre-trial speech, to the intense cueing that meters the trial and manages the fatigue of the participants, to the post-trial debriefing and collection of biographical data. With this semiotic net, coaches scour for talent, teasing potential up and out of young runners, up and above the surface for measurement and analysis. Talk and body intertwine in channels that precipitate and ferry potentials across territories, infixed in documents that attest to talents in distant lands. The catch in *Raymi* is stupendous. “*Imagine,*” Julio invites me to contemplate, “*a preparation even if it were in their places but with a professor who knew, and during the entire*

year. I believe we would be speaking about a very high achievement in Peru, and in very little time⁴³.”



Figure 3-14: Debriefing and collection of biographic information

3.7 Conclusion: Unjamming Channels to Ensnare Potentials

With coaches in the performance center, discussions of talent are peppered with mathematical overtones: of “potentiation,” of the “multiplication” of results, of an asymptotic growth in a biostatistical model, of a clogged reservoir of energy. An intensifying fixation on graphic artifacts that attest to bureaucratic success, as well as on sports formation programs in urban infrastructures that exclude large swaths of the populations, “jams” (Lemon 2018) channels for the detection of talent, inhibiting their flows (Appadurai 1996) while narrowing their scope to the dismay of talent prospectors in distant heights. Here, channel jamming is not

necessarily intentional, but rather a consequence of uneven infrastructural development that obstructs rural to urban pathways, as well as the material pathways through which potential translates into observable forms. Untrained youth in the countryside index a lack of familiarity with formal physical education and, at a second order (Silverstein 2003), a bureaucratic negligence and ostracism of populations from the infrastructure of athletic cultivation. Scouts like Julio labor to (re)open recruitment channels by forging new capillaries through which to convey prospects to the coast, a channel checking through collaborative, communicative labor that applies pressure (Anand 2011) to unleash potential energy and buoy Peru in short order.

Attending to new infrastructural and communicative networks within which coaches and instructors circulate their reports, we find the countryside transformed into an arena of semiotic valorization wherein embodied behavior is “para-phenomenologically” (Downey 2008) translated. Coaches, as local ethnographers themselves, create material scaffolds, or “enclosures” (Kockelman 2007) within which assessments of potential can be made, assessments in and through material artifacts like language and gesture, cones and stopwatches. Because Quechua children do not conceive of themselves as training for athletics until they meet the scouts who recruit them, their athleticism is *interactionally* emergent and collaboratively translated (Callon 1984). The athletic implications of their habits are discernible first to these external observers, who see in their actions things they do not imagine and extrapolate from their movements futures they might otherwise not conceive. As Lemon reminds us, “where contact seems to fail, phatic attention is more frequent, frantic, or forcefully reflexive, even to grant material qualities to mediating semiosis as if this act would guarantee the qualities of human relationships themselves” (2013 p.68), and here coaches strive to open a channel wherein absences—those who would fall through the cracks of an urban infrastructure otherwise—can be “fantastically

elaborated” (*ibid*), that is, measured. The trial, as a verbal *and* embodied performance, is an “entextualization,” or “a process of rendering discourse extractable, of making a stretch of linguistic production into a unit—a text—that can be lifted out of its interactional setting,” (Bauman & Briggs 1990 p.73). Thus lifted, signs of physical potential might be cross-contextually interpreted, and top prospects from the many crevices of the high-altitude Andean landscape compared.

In the Performance Center, new recruits will transition from barefoot school commutes to long-distance competitions. In the course of full-time training, recruited athletes are socialized to the metrical structures of cueing encountered during recruitment. Movement patterns will be ingrained through collaborative and communicative work, gait and stride built upon registers and cues, talk before and after training and competitions. Recruitment opens channels for reflective accounts of past, embodied movement, accounts like Huayra’s and Puriq’s above. Each has learned to channel their own potential to the surface for conscious assessment, for while recruitment is a channel that “relates a signer to interpreter, such that a sign expressed by the former may be interpreted by the later,” (Kockleman 2010 p.407), it also relates a signer to a signer *qua* interpreter; that is, signers come to reflectively grasp their own signs *post hoc*, having been trained to retrospectively make sense them. To show how coaches work to structure embodied knowledge in a way that brings pacing and fatigue into the conscious awareness of the athletes themselves—what Bourdieu referred to as “the problem of the awakening of consciousness” (1988 p.160 *et passim*)—I attend next to the ecologies of the Elite Performance Center itself.

¹ “*En la ciudad pescamos con caña, en el campo con red*”

² “*Aquellos deportistas que presentan condiciones de rendimiento deportivo y biotipo para el deporte nacional.*”

³ The recruitment caravan in which I travelled regularly passed titanic dump trucks shedding particulates as they careened downwards to junk excavated earth in the valleys. Flanked by coaches and buried under my cameras and tripods in the back seat, I would watch the machines stream from the guarded gates of new copper mines (on Andean mining struggles see Li 2015, Cadena 2015). Were they one and the same: industrial extractors pillaging Andean *apus* (sacred mountains) for precious metals, and sports recruiters scouring the countryside for precious medals? The thought dovetailed with more pernicious activities afoot in the same landscape, where human traffickers patrol provincial hinterlands to pluck unsuspecting youth from their homes and take them, or their parts, to places unknown. During the time of my fieldwork the department of Cusco suffered through a staggering number of disappearances, overwhelmingly of adolescent women from rural areas. Their fates and whereabouts were the focus of daily speculation in macabre conversations. Mingling with the rumble of passing dump trucks, these concerns echoed in my head on zigzagging journeys up rocky precipices.

⁴ Linguistic anthropological work on phaticity has proliferated widely since Jakobson: we find “phatic communion” in Canada (Slotka 2015), “phatic traces” in Japan (Nozawa 2015), “phatic rituals” in Brazil (Ansell 2017), not to mention an attending cadre of spirits (Manning 2018) and parasites (Kockelman 2010) that haunt and infect these manifold channels.

⁵ “*Dije: este año va a ser mi último año que corro.*”

⁶ “*Sin calentar entré. Mi profe me gritaba de una esquina, decía: ¡Corre! ¡Corre! ¡Corre! Yo corría vida o muerte pues.*”

⁷ “*Llegamos a los últimos cientos, por allí, estaba primera casi, sino que me ganaron en el remate. Rumi se agarraba con Yachay, las dos entraron casi juntas. Yo me quede porque no tenía velocidad.*”

⁸ “*Si mi prima hubiera traído su DNI yo nunca habría participado allí.*”

⁹ *Juegos deportivos escolares nacionales.*

¹⁰ *Juegos Sudamericanos Escolares.*

¹¹ *Consejo Sudamericano del Deporte.*

¹² “*Fortalecer los lazos de amistad y la aceptación de las diferentes costumbres y prácticas sociales a través del deporte.*”

¹³ “*De donde no había resultados empezaron a aparecer resultados. De pronto empezó a salir Cusco con medallas a nivel nacional a nivel internacional.*”

¹⁴ “*Tanta rigidez en un proceso que ha demostrado a través de los años que no es necesario.*”

¹⁵ *Juegos Deportivos de la Juventud Trasandina.*

¹⁶ “*El atletismo es tiempo y marca, y si no hay tiempo y marca, ya estamos. Eso esta clarito.*”

¹⁷ “*Va en contra de la progresión, de la continuidad en el deporte.*”

¹⁸ *Programa de Formación Deportiva Regional.*

¹⁹ See chapter one for a discussion of conversational assessments of one such urban recruit.

²⁰ “*En nuestra realidad del Cusco es prácticamente imposible.*”

²¹ *No se conoce esta realidad. No se conocen las distancias tan grandes, la diferencia de accesibilidad que hay a esas comunidades, a esos distritos, a esos anexos. De alguna manera desconocemos que esos chicos existen, que esos lugares existen. Creemos que todo es Cusco, Cusco, Cusco, o que esos chicos pueden llegar a Cusco en un momento y de esa manera entrenar en los programas que ya están establecidas. En realidad esto se sale de todo programa, se sale de todo plan.*

²² “*No hay profesores en todos los colegios que ni trabajan ni educación física. No hay quien prepare a un chico ni para llevarlo a la etapa escolar, ni a la primera fase.*”

²³ “*Más de cincuenta por ciento de los atletas en esa categoría de trece, catorce, quince, dieciséis años, no participa.*”

²⁴ “*Tenemos ahorita chicos del mismo CAR que a la hora de competir con chicos que vienen del campo pues no, a pesar de tener un entrenamiento sistemático durante un año dos años hasta tres años sin embargo con dos o tres días prácticamente les están ganando los chicos que vienen del campo, lo cual esta claro que yo pienso que la inversión tiene que estar en torno a buscar esos talentos que no se pierdan y no estar formando chicos que a lo mejor no tienen esa capacidad mas grande.*”

²⁵ As an example of the problem consider the following story. Bureaucrats made a visit one morning, and guided by

the Regional Sports Council president, demanded some kind of review of the last month of work from many members of the staff. In a reunion among technical team members afterwards, Julio delivered a rant by bashing the correspondence with which the meeting was announced, an official paper titled “metaphysical tests” (*pruebas metafísicas*), which Julio spends more than enough time decrying the bureaucrats for having no idea what *metafísica* means: “on top of the physical, which is to say spiritual!” (*encima de lo físico, es decir lo espiritual*); the team lets out a laugh, arguing softly that perhaps the intention was “physical goals” (*metas físicas*), like performance goals, and that Julio’s anger is justified though not for the grander misunderstanding of the word but for typographic errors. Perhaps most salient of the outrages is the mention that the trainers were encouraged to recruit 18-year-olds, given that recent medals have been obtained by 18-year-olds in the center. Completely lost on the bureaucrats, according to Julio, is the fact that the kids who won those medals were recruited years earlier and trained. In fact, the whole episode suggests that the bureaucrats do not even understand the notion of training at all, the irony of which is not at all lost on Julio, who notes that the word “training” is quite literally in the center’s full title.

²⁶ It is no coincidence, then, that CAR coaches try to recruit in the countryside most heavily between September and November. This is because they send prospects to the regional cross-country championship held annually every December. A high rank in the regional championship secures a spot at nationals at sea level in Lima in January. Medal there and the CAR doors open wide for you.

²⁷ “*Acá lo que se requiere es a esos profesores que están allí en esos lugares de repente capacitarlos de repente motivarlos de repente darles algún conocimiento mayor y incentivarlos para que también puedan obtener algún beneficio por los talentos obtenidos.*”

²⁸ “*En las pruebas de fondo de resistencia no es así. Es un proceso a largo plazo y el resultado mas grande que podríamos obtener esta a partir de los cinco, seis anos de preparación, a ocho diez anos. Y claro, eso de buscar un resultado inmediato en pruebas de resistencia es imposible.*”

²⁹ “*De repente se empezó con esas exigencias, pero no nos hemos dado cuenta de que estos chicos empezaron de esta manera y no de otra.*”

³⁰ “*Tenemos que volver nuevamente al origen, no cortar y cambiar completamente el sistema.*”

³¹ “*Ponte, hacia Hanaq tienes Puka, donde hay gente que es muy interesante. De Puka tienes más arriba todavía, tienes otras comunidades, este, luego tienes a Hanaq mismo. Luego tienes Ankhas, de Ankhas tienes hasta Yana, que también hay gente allí que es uff. Tienes Qhosi, que está atrás hacia Oqe, también allí hay gente que nunca ha venido ni siquiera a un juego escolar, es lejos eh. De allí sí hay gente también, porque es de la misma altura casi Pacha, solo que nunca vienen, está lejos... También el otro lado acá por Yuraq. En las alturas de Yuraq una vez vi a un campeón nacional...que realmente era lo máximo en ese momento. Y vi a un niño de doce años que tenía una chacarera, ¿ya? Empezó la competencia y todo, y el niño con una chacarera lo hizo, o sea lo destrozó.*”

³² “*Bueno la verdad es que si estuviéramos en cada colegio, un profesor que o por lo menos en cada distrito un profesor que pudiera apoyar varios colegios la verdad es que el trabajo seria muchísimo mas fácil no y ciertamente las mayores déficits que tenemos es por justamente porque no hay ese tipo de profesores o porque no hay ese entusiasmo también en algunos profesores o en algunos directores y bueno si eso era lo que viéramos en todas partes yo pienso que en el Perú no duplicaría sino yo creo que multiplicaría por muchos mas los resultados deportivos no, porque no se perderían tantos talentos.*”

³³ “*La mayoría de los chicos no saben que es el atletismo. Cosas muy diferentes de lo que pasa en Kenia o en Etiopía, donde tantos no se pierden, porque todos allí quieren correr, y tienen la oportunidad de demostrar si corren o no corren.*”

³⁴ “*El subdirector vino y me dijo que si querías correr y yo le dije ya normal pues. “Han venido del CAR” dice, y yo que será el CAR yo decía pues. Ya vamos dijimos. Nos sacan del salón y ya nos fuimos a la prueba. Quedé primera, mi compañera quedó segundo, Warani. Le había ganado, porque más antes ella me había ganado en dos mil metros creo, en las competencias que había en el colegio pues, que nos hacían hacer.*”

³⁵ “*Una evaluación con todos ellos juntos en las mismas condiciones.*”

³⁶ “*Las condiciones no siempre son las mismas en las que han corrido. Se les hace viento, menos viento, el piso, el mismo ángulo en las curvas.*”

³⁷ After a lengthy and often painful process of adaptation, that is. See chapter three for a more detailed discussion.

³⁸ For an historical parallel in the anthropology of sport consider the protest of Tommy Jones’ and John Carlos’ at the 1968 Olympic games (Hartman 2003), where each raised a fist in defiance of the very conditions that had mobilized their victories: social inequality, both in the USA and across the world. With arms extended, fists

reaching upwards towards the heights of the *Estadio Olímpico Universitario* in Mexico City, Smith and Carlos stood on shoeless feet wrapped in black socks, a counter-valorized object sign of poverty repositioned in defiance.

³⁹ “*Ya sabían que yo era así corredor de quiñota, así que todos tenían miedo a mi. Siempre ganaba en juegos escolares.*”

⁴⁰ “*Al profe niquiera le dió interés. Las carreras por mi propia cuenta daba.*”

⁴¹ “*Como no han tenido roce competitivo, no se dan cuenta de que...de que va haber un momento en el cual diríamos que la...se acaba la energía, entonces hay...se acaba la energía a esa velocidad entonces claro, ellos no conocen eso, y ellos creen en ese momento que van a salir, que van a poder aguantar ese ritmo, y en realidad pues no, no es así, porque no lo han experimentado anteriormente.*”

⁴² “*Nos damos cuenta en ese mismo colegio pues había una pista marcada, entonces se nota que el profesor de una manera había trabajado anteriormente, y aparte que es un colegio donde han salido chicos buenos, chicos talentosos, como Nina.*”

⁴³ “*Imagínate, una preparación aunque fuera en sus lugares pero con un profesor que sabe y durante todo un año. Yo creo que estaríamos hablando de una superación muy alta en el Perú en muy poco tiempo.*”

Chapter 4 : Translating Potential

4.1 Introductory Vignette: A Technical Control in the Training Center



Figure 4-1: Time keeping beside the track in Cusco

Nina is set off from Cusco’s bustling traffic by a high perimeter wall, an infrastructural membrane that shields her from the commotion of the neighborhoods that enclose the Elite Performance Center. She circulates on the track, careening down the near side straightaway, her breathing heavy but regulated. Her face scrunches in anguish, but her time promises rewards. Precious milliseconds tick on Idalberto’s stopwatch. From the sidelines he screams: “*your arms!*” Flashbacks to last week, *palizos*¹ in each hand, a corrective drilling to address long-

standing trouble with her unruly upper limbs, prone to skew when fatigue weighs on them. She returns each to its right place, yelping as she passes before Idalberto's watchful eyes atop the lookout tower.

Again he erupts: "*Go Nina! Remember that it's momentary! You're headed towards seven minutes! You have to achieve it!*" The moment is pregnant with anticipation: Nina is racing against a ghost who haunts the first lane, her former self who set the time against which she measures herself today. Idalberto's eyes jockey from his stopwatch to his pupil. His shouts envelop the track. "*When I first arrived I didn't understand him so well,*" Nina often says. Idalberto's Spanish was as foreign as his fixation on stopwatches and milliseconds. It made her nervous then, but nervousness now comes before her *control*, the scheduled measuring of her progress in a perpetual quest for improvement.

"Let's go! Six forty!"

No sooner does Nina's foot land at the edge of the water past the final hurdle than Idalberto's voice crescendos, relaying the seconds to her. She bares her teeth turning onto the final stretch.

"Let's go! Twenty seconds for the last hundred meters!"

She pushes.

"Let's go! Six fifty!"

Clap.

"Let's go! Fifty-four!"

Clap.

"Fifty-five!"

Inhale.

“Fifty-six!”

Exhale.

“Fifty-seven!”

Inhale.

“Seven!”

...

She crosses the finish line.

“Very good Nina! Seven zero three. Very good. Very good. Very good.”

Nina is crying. After strenuous revolution she wanders haphazardly through fugue on the soft grass inside of the asphalt oval. Her legs quake beneath her until she collapses. From afar I see her, chest heaving, pitched on hands and knees, and though I know she gasps for breath I ponder how it looks like she is retching instead. Idalberto lifts Nina back to the sovereignty of her feet, whispering encouragement:

“Let’s go, don’t throw yourself down, because you’ve drained yourself.”

She cries.

“What’s wrong? What happened?”

“In my head, I couldn’t anymore.”

“What?!”

“In the last lap.”

“Nothing of it, it’s three thousand with obstacles. Let’s go, it’s very good. You have to be happy. You’ve run your best mark. How much did you have here Nina? Seven how much?

Fifteen?”

“Eleven.”

“Eleven. From seven eleven to seven zero three. Look how much you improved.”

Today the anxiety is abated: Nina runs exactly as is hoped for her. She has bested her former self and turned into someone new, with a new benchmark to surpass. Hers has been a special morning boding well in the lead up to her competition. Idalberto grins, dutifully recording the times from the chronometer into his notebook.

“Pulse!” he shouts.

Nina’s finger migrates to her carotid artery, and when her fingertip presses against the flesh of her neck it finds rhythmic hiccups of oxygenated blood, corpuscles that leap from their highway in patterned jumps. Her motion suspended, she counts on stable feet, then delivers the numbers to Idalberto.

“Good, the recuperation!”

As he passes on his way back to the lookout tower, he invites me to envision Nina’s imminent future: *“if at 3400 meters above sea level she is running like this, imagine how she will run on the coast.”*

When her warmup laps, dynamic stretching, technical drills, two-kilometer control, cool down jog, hyperextensions, and sit-ups come to an end, the sun has risen high enough to burn. The biomedical team notices the hot light cooking the sweat off Nina’s head. She is sitting on the grass beyond the long jump box, one leg extended fully in front of her, the other bent, knee pressed against her chest, around which she wraps her arms to stretch her lower back. Steam rises from her jet-black hair, loosely bundled in a ponytail exploding from its elastic restraint after hours of exertion, wet strands stuck to cheeks that glisten red. *“Really?!”* she asks incredulously, jogging over to me.

After watching herself bake in miniature on the display port of my videocamera, Nina will stand at attention on the pavement in front of her high school for the national anthem. To the untrained eye she'll look just like the other girls around her in the unforgiving wool of an oversized school uniform. When Idalberto found her in *Raymi* she was rail thin, an unassuming child, always looking between her feet. Now her adolescent frame is wrapped in dense musculature, striated slabs and caps that twitch and shudder as she traverses the track, as she cries in a heap on the grass, as she laughs watching a video replay of her steam halo. Her movement is patterned; where once she stepped trepidly now she strides elegantly, attuned to the nuances of the track and the angle of its curves. How did she come to be this way? How is she made to stay this way?

4.2 Wielding Language to Regulate Environments

Idalberto's approving assessment of Nina's exertion is a diagram of Peru's geography, which maps a relation between the running prowess of Andean natives and the environments in which they move. Presupposing coordinated training which will take her from mountain heights to coastal shores, he localizes "a latent possibility imagined as open to choice, a quality perceived as available to human modification and direction through which people can work to propel an object or subject to become something other than it is" (Taussig, Hoeyer, and Helmreich 2013, S4). As Idalberto indicates, the modification of this perceived quality proceeds in a 'here-and-now'— a spatiotemporal envelope i.e., "chronotope" (Bakhtin 1981)—with its own peculiar constraints and possibilities. Idalberto's invitation for me to imagine Nina's imminent success projects her activity from a 'here-and-now' 3400 meters above sea level in Cusco onto a 'there-and-then' at sea-level in Lima. The phrasing invites a question of where—

between which space-times, in which ecological mediums—a subject can be propelled to become something, *or someone*, “other than it is.”

Four hundred years ago, the Jesuit missionary Jose Acosta crossed the Peruvian Andes, ascending to more than 15,000 feet above sea level in the ‘here’ that Nina would set personal records in centuries later. He described a mountain passage at *Pariaqaqa* that caused in him and his fellow travelers² a sickness so brutal they threw themselves from their horses, whereupon each began wrenching “bile, then more bile both yellow and green,” as if losing their souls (Acosta 2012 [1591], Book Three, Chapter Nine). The Jesuit ascribed his symptoms to the air of the “evil spot” of the mountain, while today, biologists would ascribe the gut-wrenching discomfort he was suffering to altitude sickness. In the Peruvian Andes, the symptoms of exercise induced fatigue—shortness of breath, elevated heart rate, dizziness, nausea, fainting—can set in rapidly and severely. Untreated altitude sickness stemming from generalized hypoxia, “a decrease in available oxygen levels brought on by lowered barometric pressure at high elevations” (Bigham 2013 p.190), “presents severe physiological challenges to the human body” (*ibid*) and can lead to fatal cerebral and pulmonary edemas. These symptoms sneak up on ambitious travelers who hit the ground running upon arrival to high-altitude zones.

Despite the physiological and climactic challenges involved in living at high-altitude—including hypoxia, radiation, cold temperatures, and high energetic costs of subsistence—human groups moved into and populated inhospitable Andean Mountain heights thousands of years ago (Beal 2000; Julian & Moore 2019; Rademaker et al 2015). Today, high-altitude natives of Indigenous ancestry in the Andes have adapted to their elevation both genetically and developmentally. VO₂max average values in high-altitude Andean natives are higher than sea-level natives, and compared with individuals acclimatized to hypoxic conditions, high-altitude

natives “have a low (blunted) hypoxic ventilator response, lower effective alveolar ventilation, and lower ventilation at rest and during exercise” (Brutsaert et al 2005 p.225), a suite of traits which, in conjunction with continuous exposure to hypoxia, suggest an exercise differential compared to sea-level populations. Yet though competitive excellence in sport may demand extreme performance that can hinge on evolutionary adaptations, their reflective cultivation is not an evolutionary inevitability but rather a cultural project, one located in discrete historical circumstances and often guided by trained experts.

Separated by four hundred years while strewn upon the same ground, Acosta the missionary and Nina the athlete inhabit two strikingly different moments: the Jesuit, distraught and disheveled, wrenching in agony atop his horse then gasping for air at its feet; Nina, hurtling through space fatigued but determined, her legs powered by lungs filled with the same thin air that threatened the missionary’s life. For Acosta the pain was a physical undoing, a “seasickness” on Earth which brought into parallel the dizzying nausea of ocean traversing and high-altitude climbing. For Nina, it is a fortification, a stepping-stone that sits between performances actual and possible, between the high-altitude environment of her upbringing and the coastal environment of her upcoming contest. Whereas for Acosta thin air was the crux of his enfeeblement, for Nina it is the lynchpin of her improvement. For Acosta, hypoxia was a mystery to be likened to other extreme ecologies. For Nina and her coaches, it is a scientific revelation, one variable in a complex calculation that organizes their travel *between* ecologies.

Minding this epistemological disjuncture, this chapter explores laborious attempts to port embodied potential from the somatic geography of the rural countryside to the regimented training of the performance center. I focus closely on spatialized moments that sit between chronotopes, attending to a translational process I label *eco-chronotopic calibration*: the

semiotic prognostication of embodied futures vis-a-vis spatialized ecological mediums. Linguistic anthropological engagements with chronotopes typically consider the manner in which distinct space-times are projected from real-time discursive interaction onto narrated universes—be they through the literary voicing effects of modernist novelists (e.g., Agha 2005), during the get-to-know-you routines of budding graduate students “placing” one another in cultural hierarchies (e.g., Silverstein 2013), or in the transpositional narratives of story tellers (e.g., Perrino 2005). In contrast, I explore how communities that coalesce around body cultivation temporalize and spatialize their movement with respect to the media of their ecologies and their passage in the channels between them.

The idea that movement through spatialized airs could affect the body has been one avenue of exploration in environmental history: for example, a nineteenth century fascination with “travel health,” which purported to “rejuvenate stamina” for city dwellers exposed to the ills of urban air through the enhancing effects of travel to fresher climes (Jankovic 2010). Anthropological studies of the navigation of environmental boundaries in the interest of corporeal wellbeing have led to theorizations of new infrastructures of exposure. Working in the context of smoggy urban China, Ayo Wahlberg recasts Margaret Lock’s seminal concept “local biology” as “exposed biology” (Wahlberg 2018; Lock 1993) to highlight creeping anxiety regarding the purity of biological materials. Enter the sperm bank, a high-tech repository shielded from floating particulates in the street, one that encloses reproductive material in a safe space across whose membrane crosses no toxic element. In this case, exposure is a daily symptom of inhabiting the chronotope of urban modernity, and biomedical interventions furnish new spaces bounded off from that space-time to protect vulnerable substances.

Alternatively, anthropologists have focused on chronotopic calibration across ecologies by looking at enhancement technologies of the body that *harness* the harmful effects and stressors of environmental exposure. Consider Andrew Bickford's exploration of "skin-in" enhancement technologies, the ways the U.S. military "imagines, designs, and embeds unseen biomedical countermeasures in soldiers' bodies to make them resistant and kill-proof in the face of the enemy, the environment, disease, and the world" (Bickford 2019 p.41; c.f. Annas & Annas 2009; MacLeish 2012). To fortify soldier biology in anticipation of harsh environments, immunizations and vaccines are administered to leverage immunological environments internal to the body, thereby resisting pathogens encountered in the extreme environments of combat. Likewise, in anticipation of interstellar missions, astronauts in training "undergo protected exposures to health- and life-threatening spaces that are in the precarious initial stages of social incorporation" (Olson 2010 p.176), navigating simulated environments that approximate extreme conditions in and out of orbit while within controlled training contexts on Earth. These kinds of anticipatory ecological enhancements provide the soldier and the astronaut with a "corporal sufficiency" (Hogle 2005) to preempt and guard against harm encountered in new space-times, materializing threatening conditions in regulated training doses to facilitate future-facing strategizing in matters of combat and interstellar exploration.

Of course, athletes who push to physical and social extremes in the race to cultivate their potentials find no shortage of techno-enhancements promising enhanced competition results through alterations to environments internal to the body, like the ingestion of banned pharmacological "ergogenic aids" such as anabolic steroids and erythropoietin³ (Thein et al 1995; see also Henne 2014 on "techopreneurialism" in sport). But environmental regulations need not be constrained to the hormonal and endocrinological fluctuations of individual bodies.

The training center in Cusco serves as a regulable ecology within which to build humans and futures, a “techno-natural regime” (Escobar 1999) that builds hypoxia into its very material perimeters to afford (Gibson 1979) new eco-communicative combinations of high-altitude air and disciplinary pedagogy. An athlete who enters the Elite Performance Center prepares at high-altitude for sea-level competitions, anticipating a future self equipped to set performance records at lower elevations, who “breathes life into the visible spectacle” of its official self-measurement, “animates it and nourishes it from within, and forms a system with it” (Merleau-Ponty 2012 p.209). Each athlete interacts while “immersed in a kind of force-field set up by the currents of the media that surround them” (Ingold 2008 p.213); they are athletes-in-training-environments that convene ecological and communicative media. I consider hypoxia an environmental medium in which athletes move while exposed to its outcomes; it is purposefully mustered to calibrate the disparate space-times of which Idalberto speaks, the ‘here-and-now’ of high-altitude Cusco and the ‘there-and-then’ of sea-level Lima.

To contextualize the use of hypoxic environments in sports programming, I begin by situating the training regimes of coaches in Cusco within a broader sports scientific literature on human-environment interactions and sports programming. Then, I analyze how athletes and coaches in the sports compound attempt to regiment space and time into predictable metrics that hold in the journey across altitudes. Punctuated by regular progress tests, or *controls*, the center’s training schedule is structured by ritual invocations of temporal progress, densely regimented affairs that portend impending improvements in competition performances. Drawing from linguistic anthropological engagements with poetics (Jakobson 1960, 1966)—or formal equivalences in stretches of discourse, that is, “meter⁴” (Silverstein 1984 p.183, see also 2004)—I analyze the poetic structures of control tests as “windows onto interactional and cultural drama”

(Lempert 2018 p.123) of eco-chronotopic calibration. In the control's "co-eval" (Silverstein 2005) calibration, the future is sought in the present, as athletes and coaches orient to inter-discursive resonances within and between training and competition environments, a "semiosis across encounters" (Agha 2005) where success in the latter is taken to normatively index training progress or, alternatively, problems with nutrition, motivation, or other maladaptive issues that impede progress.

Despite regimented efforts to maximize the ecological affordance of hypoxia, eco-enhancements cause their own translational problems of adaptive shock. For the "weathering" athletic body (Allen-Collinson et al 2019) transitioning from the rhythms of the countryside to the rigors of professional sport, arrival to the center is a mysterious time of frustrating attempts to "disentangle" (Roberts 2017) embodied phenomena. Celebrated for the "gift" of their aerobic capacity, athletes arriving to their new home encounter demanding corporeal regimes that exact physical and social tolls. These include environmental shocks associated with navigating changes in altitude and humidity between their training and competition environments, embodied shocks adapting to the frequency and intensity of systematic training sessions on a daily schedule, and social shocks adapting to the new communicative environment of the training center, which requires regular conversational contact with members of the biomedical team on the one hand, and intensive technique drilling on the track with coaches on the other. Attempts to catalyze the talent of new recruits meet a zone of resistance in the adaptive struggles of the athletes, who begin to shoulder a temporal anxiety about losing their place in the center due to faltering metrics, leading them to eye other opportunities beyond the perimeter fence around the track.

4.3 Hypoxia as an Ideal Medium for Endurance Athletes

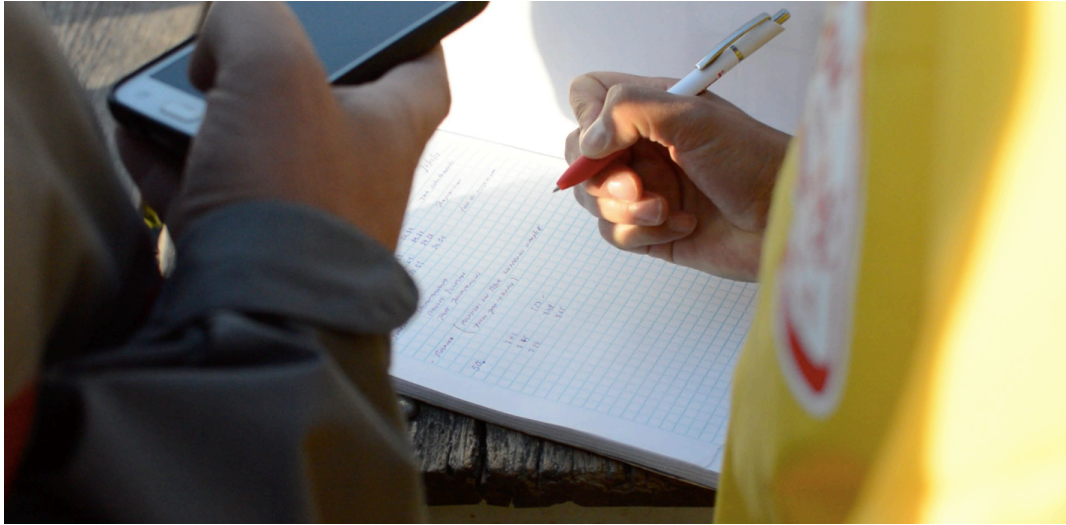


Figure 4-2: Coaches marking repetition times and other metrics in their training notebooks

Idalberto is fingering the dry pages of his record books, heavy binders about which dust plumes when they drop on his wooden desktop. He sits at one of the handful of desks that line the sides of the coaching office in the administrative wing. His binders burst with papers, some crinkled and yellowing but all in order, replete with glyphs that portend burn out and foretell victory. Turning the pages, one travels back in time. The numbers in each column run progressively higher as the calendar year at their upper right corner descends, every sheet bearing snapshots of past performances from current and ex-athletes: Idalberto sees a plateau here, a hiccup there, a record highlighted in yellow ink. He will speak endlessly about this code.

At Idalberto's right lies the smaller notebook he carries to the track each day to relay numbers from the training sessions to the binders. With his right hand he keeps the notebook open, pointer finger depressing the page, blood drained from the fingertip, white and extended at the joint, which rests beneath the graphite but does not smear it. His glasses bounce on furrowed brow. He is scribbling new values for Nina and Chiri, the former flourishing, the latter faltering,

both of whom flank him behind the desk, looking over his shoulders to witness their evolution over the months and years in the scribbles that fill the pages. Bathed in the glow of morning light rushing through the office windows, the group casts shadows onto the commons area beyond, their nods and gesticulations turned into shadow puppetry on linoleum still wet and pungent after the cleaning crew's morning rounds.

Nina retreats from the desk to sit in the corner, content and euphoric, killing time before descending to make her way to class. Chiri leans in. Hours earlier she pushed through a conditioning circuit, completing three sets of interval sprints, the first two with weighted vests before shedding the weight and beating her own marks on the final repetition in each set. Now she is freshly showered and sporting sweats, waffling in the coach's office before meandering to the cafeteria on sore legs for her post-workout meal, free until her early afternoon class at the University.

She and Idalberto are squabbling, poking fun at repetition times much too high. Idalberto chides as she protests.

"Thirty-nine the first: thirty-nine thirty-two, thirty-nine thirty-four. You did both with the vest. When you did it without the vest: thirty-seven forty-one. And it's the very first round!"

"It's better than the second round."

"But no, the second has to be better than that one, it has to be around thirty-seven with the vest around thirty-five without the vest. And you showed that there you were working with lots of reserve."

"No!"

"How are you going to tell me no?!"

"If you told me that I was taking off like a bullet, I did it like that then, like a bullet."

“Ah, well.”

Idalberto lifts his binder for Chiri to inspect closely. She looks on, blushing now, accepting the undeniable evidence of a diminished morning effort, which jumps out from the page.

“Look: you run thirty-one in the last round, so that is to say that everything here is simply with reserve.”

Chiri nods in acquiescence as Idalberto returns the binder to the desktop. The sweat of the morning has dried. All that remains now are the numbers etched in graphite, with which no athlete can debate. Playful chiding has turned sour, leaving tension in its wake.

Appropriately upbraided, Chiri scuttles out of the office, sliding slippers against the floor to turn the corner and disappear into the arcing corridor that leads to the dining area. Nina remains, breathing calmly while Idalberto finishes scribbling in his binders. She looks out the window, up at the clusters of houses on the rising valley sides. She is smiling. The redness in her cheeks is gone. Her hair is combed and returned to its sleek shape, held together and back by a new elastic band. Idalberto does not look up when Nina exits, only mumbling to her as he scribbles.

“The afternoon will be easy.”

From the security gate Nina descends from the dormitory towards the perimeter fence to cross into the world beyond this smaller universe. From the office I see her hair bob in its restraint with each step down the worn red stairs, until her head disappears beneath the horizon of the uppermost landing. Chiri’s footsteps echo faintly as she treks to the dining hall. Then a quiet falls over the center.



From Monday to Saturday, in the dark before daybreak, resident athletes in the training center rise from bed and prepare to descend to the track. They trickle into the commons from out of the dormitories. The sounds of their scuffling feet echo down the hallways, dissipating murmurs that bounce from end to end of the facility, through a crescent moon of bedrooms and offices that arcs from east to west. From the right the men tumble out of a corridor that curves away to the nutritionist's post by the kitchen, while the women emerge from their rooms to the left, beyond which lies the laundry room and further still a secondary physical therapy station. They congregate by the security gate, just a few steps from the offices of the coaches and the technical director to one side, the sports psychologist's space on the other, before making their way to the asphalt. The compound itself is doubly enclosed, tucked away within a larger campus that sprawls over nearly three city blocks in the heart of *Cusco*, situated beside the national hospital, opposite the regional hospital, and catty corner from the *Universidad Nacional de San Antonio del Abad de Cusco*.

Seen from afar, the training center looks like a UFO, a shimmering metallic dome dotted with recessed window wells from which one can look out onto the steep hills of the *Huatanay* valley, which flank the structure on north and south sides. When I first stumbled upon the Elite Performance Center and discussed the possibility of conducting fieldwork with the team, the staff explained that the residential training facility is a naturally hypoxic environment. I nodded knowingly, familiar with the concept. Athletes across sports disciplines have long sought the performance enhancing effects of high-altitude training, and hypoxia and other high-altitude human adaptations have intrigued scholars of human biology for some time (e.g., Chapman et al

2014; Płoszczyca et al 2018). High-altitude training is a celebrated training modality the world over in professional sports programs, particularly for events that value endurance. Running, cycling, and combat sports are among the most common disciplines to incorporate it into their programming. The wider sports training industry even seeks to capitalize on the purported benefits of exercise at elevation, selling tents to simulate high-altitude sleep and masks to reduce oxygen uptake during intense exercise.

For the very characteristics of the altitude, of course you're going to encounter practically a natural aerobic development"⁵ Idalberto says while he browses the *control* times of his athletes in the coaches' office. Track and field coaches across the country contend that before the training centers were built one would see high-altitude natives winning virtually every long-distance running event at the national level in Peru, prompting deliberations in the Sports Institute about where exactly in the country to break ground and construct facilities to capitalize on this "natural development." As Mateo, a doctor in the center, put it: *"with the purpose of being able to shape athletes in long distance events, in what Peru best performs in track and field, the CAR we could say was designed for disciplines that need resistance, or training in hypoxia, so that they can develop better."*⁶ Cusco stood out as one among a handful of possible locations to leverage this environment. Because the athletes in the training center in Cusco were born *and* grew up in high altitude environments, coaches consider them fitting candidates for endurance training for this "natural" live-high train-high lifestyle, which calls no attention to itself as deliberate training. The training center was thus "designed" to provide a material infrastructure that could leverage this ecological affordance, that is, it laminates two "natural" resources together: the "natural" development of an autochthonous high-altitude population, and a naturally hypoxic environment in Cusco.

Peru's Sports Institute was hardly the first to integrate high-altitude training into a national sports curriculum. Sports programmers throughout the world have employed several training modalities that incorporate hypoxic exposure to enhance professional training regimens, including arrangements wherein athletes sleep at sea level and train in artificial hypoxic environments, or vice versa, or live and train entirely at high-altitude (e.g., Baker et al 1976). Though considered "natural," for its enhancement potential hypoxia has nonetheless caught the watchful eye of regulators such as the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), which have deliberated the legality of high-altitude training a few times in the last few decades. Chemical compounds that mimic the effects of hypoxia on the blood, like cobalt, were recently added to the prohibited substances list by WADA (Lippi et al 2006; Skalny et al 2019), and in the aftermath of Lance Armstrong's 2006 doping scandal—which brought public attention to blood doping with EPO, a way of procuring high-altitude training benefits through direct blood transfusions—WADA temporarily banned "artificial" hypoxic environments, or training chambers pressurized to simulate high-altitude ecologies at sea level (see Levine 2006; Miah 2006). This gulf between "artificial" and "natural" was the principal dichotomy with which WADA's Executive Ethics Panel deliberated and ultimately advocated for banning the use of hypoxic chambers altogether, a decision that ultimately was reversed in the face of resistance from the broader scientific community (e.g., Coleman et al, Duke Law 2007).

Taking an athlete's vantage point and voice, the panel of WADA sports ethicists who favored banning the technology declared: "my responsibility for my performance is diminished by technologies that operate upon me, independent of any effort on my part"⁷ (WADA 2006). In other words, insofar as hypoxic chambers were a "passive" technology that operated "independent" of the athlete's effort, they were, in the estimation of the committee, out of

accordance with the codified ‘*spirit of sport*,’ that is, they did not exemplify the “virtuous perfection” of “natural talents” in a “dedicated” training program (WADA 2018 p.14). But unlike artificial hypoxia induced in laboratory chambers reminiscent of science fiction films, *naturally* hypoxic environments have received no punitive sanction from any sports governing body, precisely because the effects of high-altitude training and residence materialize in sea-level performances that call no attention to themselves as “assisted” or “enhanced”. High-altitude environments are therefore entwined in national and commercial projects of athletic excellence across the world. As in Peru, the United States flagship Olympic Training Center is located roughly a mile above sea level in Colorado Springs.

“*Like running with a weighted vest*,”⁸ Idalberto explains, describing the invisible heft of training at high-altitude locations. “*On the coast, it’s taken off, and bam, explosion.*”⁹ Taking Chiri’s early morning metabolic conditioning as an analogy, the air of the training center drags down metrics between repetitions “like running with a vest” because athletes are performing in an environment within which they cannot deliver oxygen throughout the body as quickly as at sea-level. Given the need to predict the transition from high altitude to coast, ensuring the optimal functioning of the athlete is of paramount importance to the staff, hence the array of biometrics with which they gauge the training progress of residents. The biomedical team in the training center uses direct and indirect means to calculate the VO₂ max, or maximal oxygen consumption during exercise (e.g., see Brutsaert 2016) of each athlete. With the resources available in Cusco, they lead athletes through periodic tests on a cycle ergometer, using “*physical capacity and a regression line in order to be able to calculate approximately how much the VO₂ max could be*,”¹⁰ Mateo explained. When athletes travel to Lima for sea-level competitions, they generally spend time in the *Sports Village*¹¹ of San Luis, the most developed

sports facility in the Institute, which boasts access to an HP COSMOS treadmill in its physiology laboratory. The treadmill and other CPET¹² machines serve “*in order to calculate the exchange there is of CO₂ with the exchange there is of oxygen,*”¹³ a much more accurate value to complement the indirect measures of Cooper tests and pulse metrics that coaches use on the track in the day-to-day training.

Noting the ecological differential between highland and coast, Cusco’s “oxygen debt” (*la deuda de oxígeno que hay*), Mateo explains that “*definitely, high altitude is the **ideal medium** in which to train these athletes in this type of modality: long-distance, middle-distance, five kilometers, ten kilometers etcetera,*”¹⁴ competition events that demand sustained aerobic efforts over greater distances. Habituated to this medium, the athletes in the training center make incremental progress during training blocks that stretch months, always trying to set records “here,” in Cusco, against which they measure their best marks yet, generally done “there,” in lower-altitude or sea-level competitions. From the ecology of the training compound athletes pursue these benchmarks from which they can reliably anticipate a deduction at sea level competitions. “*If you, for example, run ten kilometers, and you want to run in 28 minutes it is assumed that here in Cusco you ought to run it in 30 minutes. More or less, there is a reference mark at altitude,*”¹⁵ says coach Rene. This eco-differential, or “reference mark”, allows coaches to predict the competition futures of their pupils by extrapolating “coastal rhythms¹⁶” from metrics obtained in the mountains. Here then is a delineation of two space times and the channel between them: the competition schedule structures travel from one space to the other and back, while the infrastructure lays the tracks between the two ecologies, linking disparate ecological mediums through coordinated embodied labor. When Idalberto asks of Nina “your best time here, how much was it?”¹⁷ after she completes her two-kilometer test run, he is drawing attention

to a situated body-environment interaction in Cusco, a ‘here-and-now’ that figures a future self towards which to progress.

4.4 Local Conceptions of the Relation Between Language and Embodied Movement

“*I imagine great things for myself in athletics,*” Phawaq tells me as we descend to the track. Fueled by stories he heard about the training center while still commuting as a middle school student, his “*passion for running was born*” when he began competing in the national school games, fueled by a desire to enter the facility. “*What I love most are my legs. I admire my legs. I have such a force,*”¹⁸ Phawaq tells me. With just a year in the center he has been progressing steadily in his training, to his own satisfaction and that of his coaches. Now preparing for 1500 meters in competition at Lima, a seriousness comes over him in the lead up to a *control*, this crucial moment to assess his fitness before the event. Typically jovial and gregarious, Phawaq grows increasingly silent as the start time of his test nears, saying little to his colleagues upon arriving to the track, then moving on to incorporate the technical instruction of his coaches with precision during his warm-up routine. A handful of athletes who will not participate in the control loiter around the area to witness the exertion, and the biomedical team has assembled as well to provide encouragement from the sidelines (*alentar*) and support the runners reaching for new records.

As with competitive athletes across disciplines, all the coaches in the performance center and throughout the Peruvian Institute of Sport engineer programs for their athletes based on a sports science theory of “supercompensation” (*supercompensación*), which entails exposing the trainee to an adaptive stimulus or training load, pushing the trainee to the limit of their recuperative ability by progressively intensifying that load, then diminishing the work rate in a

pre-planned “dismunition” (*dismunición*), or taper, so that the trainee recovers beyond their initial metrics in a programmed “peak” (*cima*; for reviews of block periodized training and super compensatory effects see Issurin 2016, 2019). The training load is carefully regulated, the overload progressive, or incrementally ramped in intensity over the course of a training cycle—and over the course a professional career—while occasionally pulling back to ensure that the athlete “does not burn out”.¹⁹ At the training center, a “control” of various distances, from one to three kilometers most commonly, “is done more or less every two months in order to readjust the working rhythm”²⁰ expected of each athlete in the various event distances they specialize in, explains Tomas, the technical director. It also helps coaches “prognosticate coastal rhythms²¹” using “*parciales*”: shorter distance *controles* from which the rhythms of longer distances at sea-level can be inferred.

Table 4-1: Periodized training blocks of a full competition cycle

Macro	Meso	Micro
Full training cycle, from <i>base</i> to specialization to taper to super-compensation/peak (3-4 months).	Training block that privileges one training adaptation over others. (3-4 weeks). E.g. <i>base</i> builds work capacity, or an increase in the total work output to build endurance for ensuing training blocks, whereas <i>dismunición</i> / taper alleviates training volume to provoke super-compensation.	Combination of training procedures specific to the desired adaptation (A few days to a week). E.g. metabolic conditioning circuits, high intensity interval training (sprint/jog/sprint/jog), or a scheduled <i>control</i> .

For accomplished athletes in the training center who have learned to locate their own maturation within the frames of these distributed cycles, the *control* serves as a stepping-stone between the eco-chronotopes of mountain and coast. To maximize the ecological affordance of high-altitude training, the program must generate foundational metrics, or “reference marks”,

from which to anticipate improvements at lower elevation. Consider how Anka, recalling a competition cycle shortly after he entered the center, narratively orders his competition trajectory with baseline metrics from his high-altitude workload and prospective marks at his coastal races:

De ese entonces regreso de transandinos. Entrenamos dos meses, y un poco adolorido de la rodilla voy al campeonato nacional de menores, que era clasificatoria al mundial, pero tenias que hacer la marca. Pero los chicos siempre me comentaban que los de Huancayo eran fuertes. Predominaba siempre Huancayo en las categorías menores juvenile mayores siempre eran Fuertes. Era seis catorce en tres mil con obstáculos la marca, seis catorce, yo tenia seis catorce en planos. Seis trece creo que era. Yo me decía en ese entonces si en planos puedo correr seis trece sin entrenar, entrenando puedo correr con obstáculos así. Entonces en esa fecha corrí, llegamos a Lima y corrí, salió seis diecisiete, pero con vallón mas alto, entonces prof Rene reclamó y paso una serie de cosas y al día siguiente me obligaron a correr otra tres mil, otra vuelta pero con la medida exacta, hicieron de nuevo el circuito, de vuelta corrí y hice seis doce, baje. Hice la marca pero no pude viajar ese ano porque tenia quince anos recién, la IAAP no permitían que los menores vayan al mundial.

From that time **I return** from *trasandinos*. We train two months, and a little injured in the knee **I go** to the national youth championship, which was a classification for the World, but you had to make **the mark**. But they always commented to me that those from Huancayo were strong. Huancayo always dominated in youth, junior, and adult categories, they were always strong. It was six fourteen in three kilometers with hurdles **the mark**, six fourteen. I had six fourteen flat. Six thirteen I think it was. I told myself at that time **if flat I can run six thirteen without training, training I can run hurdles like that**. So on that date I run, **we get to Lima** and I ran, it came out to six seventeen, but the hurdle was too high, so coach Rene protested and a string of things happened and the next day they made me run another three kilometers, another go but with the exact measurement, they redid the circuit. And again I ran and made six twelve, **I dropped**. I made **the mark** but I couldn't travel that year because I only just turned fifteen, the IAAP didn't permit juniors to travel to the World.

Anka's description draws our attention to several things: there is the geographical convergence of competing high-altitude training populations from Cusco and Huancayo on the sea-level target of Lima. There is the lineal segmentation of training and competition marks, their prospective calibration in the march towards classification on the world circuit. There is reference to the parallel eco-chronotope of Huancayo, another high-altitude ecology renowned for producing endurance running champions. Critically, Anka figures the temporal discrepancy between his

reference mark and his competition goal as a matter of regimented training: across the space-times of his running is mapped another trajectory, of passage from “untrained” (*sin entrenar*) to “trained” (*entrenar*).

“*There has to have been, logically, an evolution*”²² Idalberto tells me, sitting on the wide wooden beam of a spare steeplechase water barrier that rests by the warmup area. Still clad in his warm-up jacket and forgiving training sneakers, Phawaq carries out technical coordination drills under the watchful eye of his coach in the lead up to his kilometer test. Phawaq has seen recent success, and though the training staff has been encouraged by his progress, it did not come without trouble. The “logical progression” of which Idalberto speaks, and the predictability upon which Anka envisions his competition marks, demand a training regimen that exerts a toll on resident athletes. As Phawaq explains, his arrival to the center set a tone that carries into subsequent controls:

*“It shocked me. Passing the days in training I didn’t adapt well, horrible injuries came to me and impeded me upon training. I was stopped almost two months, in that time I lost many competitions because of the injuries that I had. Right in a control. In a control with hurtles, my knee, just running. Little by little I felt the pain, and it worsened a lot.”*²³

In his initial weeks Phawaq struggled to adapt to arduous twice-daily sessions, ultimately injuring his knee in the middle of a control, at precisely the moment his progress was being measured. Remorseful about his competition finishes while recuperating from his injury, his impending control causes a tinge of anxiety, and Phawaq goes about warming up intently, albeit with caution.



Figure 4-3: Pre-control technical warm-up and coordination drills

For new recruits arriving from rural areas in particular, a dearth of technical coordination and embodied awareness encountered during recruitment in the countryside demands immediate intervention in the center, a point the technical director, and every one of the coaches, made forcefully to me:

“Those that are recently here, the difference is abysmal. Those kids don’t have a drop of coordination. Why? Because they have never worked anything for coordination in their schools nor in physical education, nor has anyone ever preoccupied themselves for those things. So when they arrive here, they arrive at zero. What do they have? Their aerobic capacity, maybe the talent in order to be able to do it, but they don’t know, they don’t have even the most minimal understanding. I remember Huayra, when she got here, she couldn’t do one crunch or one push up. She didn’t do one! And today? An athlete that already has two world-level competitions. She has eighth place in a youth world championship. She has I-don’t-know-how-many South American medals.”²⁴

Beginning their transition from the so-called “innate training” of their rural upbringing (see chapter one)—what coaches call “natural” or “organic” training deriving from countryside commutes—new recruits build upon their “aerobic capacity” and “talent” by acquiring training

“understanding” (*conocimiento*) in an intensive process that scaffolds movements in training blocks distributed throughout the competition cycle. This knowledge acquisition thus catalyzes the capacity of new recruits, which would flounder without the technical instruction.

For these reasons, athletes and coaches at the facility explain that language is an indispensable resource in the quest to cultivate embodied technique among resistance runners.²⁵ According to the technical staff, their cues “stay above” (*quedar arriba*) the athletes, latching onto and tugging at limbs, guiding motion and structuring movement. In a local practice of perseverance that posits that “the athlete lives from the neck up” (*el atleta vive del cuello para arriba*), cueing re-triggers attention to form, compelling the mind to endure when the body starts to falter. When athletes bare their teeth and cry in earnest that their “feet can bear no more” (*ya no aguantan mis pies*), coaches retort with raised voices and urgency, pleading for them to remember that pain is momentary. They can be histrionic and excessive, exploding with shouts and harangues while heaving through vocal blasts that make ears ring. Their yells make athletes aware of formal breakdown in their limb configurations and pacing, they profess, corrections they say athletes “forget in an instant” (*se olvidan al instante*) and of which they cannot “sense the magnitude” (*sentir la magnitud*).

“He gives us power when he shouts,”²⁶ Phawaq says of Idalberto, who brings the training objective into constant focus through the blur of mounting exhaustion, “giving power” when muscles begin to fail. “There is always a force that tells you to advance more. So you keep exerting.”²⁷ At high altitude fatigue onset is faster and more severe, and technical instruction culls attention to embodied action as it drifts toward the “bad habits” (*malos hábitos*) of hampered movement. When athletes enter “extreme fatigue and there say ‘chao’” (*le da recansancio, y entonces ya alli ‘chao’*) to correct technique, reinforcement arrives in the form of

yells from the sidelines. The cue in this context can best be understood as a communicative ‘life preserver,’ one thrown into the waters of fatigue to rescue faltering bodies. It penetrates the sensorium of the aching competitor, lifting attention out from the rising water of exhaustion.

4.5 The Poetics of Cueing in Pre-Competition Training Tests

This discourse regarding the relation of language and the body during moments of extreme exertion imbues the *controls* with a kind of interactional charge, a sensation of being-on-the-cusp that pervades the track. It is, simply put, a spectacle, and many stop to watch it play out, suspending their activities as it comes to pass. An eerie silence falls over the track in the moments just before the start whistle, as all attune to the competitors. Amid this charge, Phawaq, Rumi, and Tika—now changed into their competition cleats and shorn of their warm-up suits—tense at the start line before the take-off whistle, a moment of silence that ritually invokes the passage into the spatio-temporal envelope of the *control*, a “nomic calibration” (Silverstein 1993) that aligns this control with all that have come before it. When the *control* begins, onlooking staff immediately note the gravity of the event, invoking in parallel the ‘now-ness’ of an effort on the other side of the start whistle, when athletes are expected to run “with everything” [4-5]. The innermost lanes of the track become their universe; non-participants do not enter this space. Phawaq and his companions transform into circulating centers of attention, who elicit first-person address from stationary onlooking athletes and coaches huddled along the straightaway on the near side [7-8].



Figure 4-4: Momentary suspension of movement before the start whistle, innermost lanes reserved for control

1.	Idalberto	<i>Listos</i>	“Ready?!”	Athletes tense at start line
2.		<i>Ya</i>	“Go!”	Start whistle; athletes take off
3.		<i>Vamos a correr Rumi</i>	“We’re going to run Rumi.”	
4.	Daniel	<i>Ahora si con todo</i>	“With everything now. ”	
5.	Michael	<i>Ahora si con todo están</i>	“They’re giving it everything now. ”	
6.	Idalberto	<i>Va bien [relajado]</i>	“Go, well relaxed.”	Phawaq approaches finish line
7.	Daniel	<i>[Fuerte vamos Phawaq]</i>	“Strong Phawaq.”	
8.	Huayra	<i>Vamos Phawaq</i>	“Let’s go Phawaq.”	

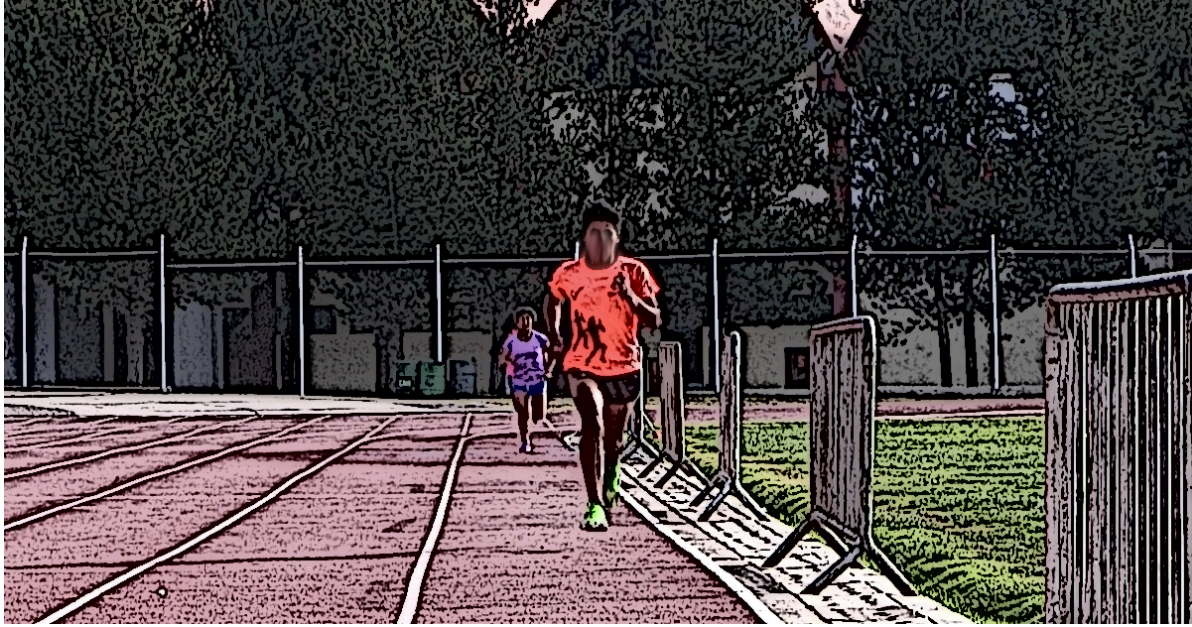


Figure 4-5: Athletes progress through nearside straightaway towards the huddle of coaches

After coming down the straightaway then passing onto the near-side curve, athletes encounter real-time delivery of corrective feedback regarding their pace and posturing, their proprioceptive awareness jolted by verbal attention to the positioning of their arms and the length of their strides [13]. With a year or more of formal training under their belts, these athletes no longer deal with problems of burn out as in recruitment, when athletes typically expend energy inefficiently in the opening laps of their trials and peter out in the final stretches. Here, coaches invoke their athletes' nascent understanding of energy reserves and of constant application of force [14-17], juggling between second-by-second feedback of stopwatch times and assessments of rhythm, imploring them to maintain form on the heels of positive evaluations of their tempo.

9.	Idalberto	<i>Bien relajadas</i>	"Well relaxed."	Rumi & Tika approach finish line
10.	Marta	<i>Vamos Tika</i>	"Let's go Tika."	
11.		<i>Vamos [vamos vamos</i>	"Let's go, let's go, let's go."	

12.	Daniel	<i>[Vamos [chicas vamos</i>	“Let’s go, girls, let’s go.”	
13.	Idalberto	<i>[Pasos grandes así con los brazos eso</i>	“ Large strides , like that with arms, that’s it.”	Phawaq passes finish line for first 200 meters
14.		<i>Vamos que va muy bien</i>	“Let’s go, it’s going really well. ”	
15.		<i>Vengan así deben buscar una marca</i>	“Come on, this is how you should seek a mark. ”	Rumi & Tika pass finish line for first 200 meters
16.		<i>Treinta y cinco</i>	“Thirty-five.”	
17.		<i>Vamos muy bien Tika quédate allí</i>	“Let’s go, very good Tika, keep it there. ”	



Figure 4-6: Athletes pass head coach and enter distal portions of the track

Once the racing athletes are furthest from the assembly of loiterers and coaches on the straightaway, cueing becomes the sole responsibility of the time-keeping coach, who maintains communicative contact with the runners at their furthest point with sparser though still blistering shouts, communicative threads stretched across the track. Here Idalberto uses a pair of female athletes to push and pull one another [22-24], maintaining rhythm in the near curve before entering the far-side straightaway, where they remain under the watchful eye of their trainer.

18.	Idalberto	<i>Vamos fuerte</i>	“Let’s go, strong.”	
19.		<i>Treinta y siete</i>	“Thirty-seven.”	
20.		<i>Vamos Rumi esos brazos vamos</i>	“Let’s go Rumi, those arms, let’s go.”	
21.		<i>Fuerte bien con los brazos Tika</i>	“Strong, good with the arms Tika.”	
22.		<i>Pasa a Rumi</i>	“Pass Rumi.”	Tika trails Rumi.
23.		<i>Alcanzale</i>	“Catch up to her.”	Tika begins to close the gap.
24.	Marta	<i>Vamos Tika</i>	“Let’s go Tika.”	
25.	Idalberto	<i>Llegate Tika</i>	“Get there Tika.”	The gap stays constant.



Figure 4-7: Coaches signal for lagging athletes to use competitors as pace makers on the far-side straightaway

As the athletes come around the near curve for the second time, the urgency begins to ratchet up palpably. Register partials and parallelism come in tightly packed cross-turn clusters [27-34]. The cueing pops and crackles in flurries at the finish line, at the moment and point of closest physical proximity with the coach. There is a visceral crescendo in volume and turn

frequency, an abundance of latched and overlapping turns as coaches and onlookers chorally implore Phawaq to maintain pace. With a promising metric now within grasp, Idalberto invokes a benchmark towards which he urges Phawaq to push in the final lap [38-39], while onlooking athletes shout for Phawaq to *rematar* [36], or increase his speed to the full extent possible for this final leg. Idalberto relays the time as his stopwatch ticks upwards, and numbers and movements begin to cohere into a real-time sketch of a newly emerging self, a future towards which this pupil races.

26.	Idalberto	<i>Sueltate sueltate Phawaq</i>	“Loosen up, loosen up Phawaq.”	Phawaq approaches straightaway curve
27.		<i>Uno catorce uno quince</i>	“One fourteen, one fifteen.”	
28.		<i>Vamos que esta lento</i>	“Let’s go, it’s slow.”	Phawaq takes straightaway
29.	Huayra	<i>Vamos [Phawaq</i>	“Let’s go Phawaq.”	
30.	Idalberto	<i>[Suelta los brazos Phawaq</i>	“Loosen the arms Phawaq.”	
31.		<i>Fuerte grande</i>	“Strong, big.”	
32.	Huayra	<i>Ultimate vuelta vamos vamos ultima</i>	“Last lap, let’s go let’s go, last one.”	Phawaq passes finish line
33.	Marta	<i>Esta lento [Phawaq</i>	“It’s slow Phawaq.”	
34.	Daniel	<i>[Vas bien vas bien vamos con todo=</i>	“Like that let’s go, with everything with everything.”	
35.	Idalberto	<i>=Ya con todo ultima vuelta</i>	“With everything now, last lap.”	
36.		<i>Ultimate vuelta con todo=</i>	“Last lap, with everything.”	
37.	Huayra	<i>=Remata=</i>	“Remata.”	
38.	Idalberto	<i>=Uno treinta y tres vamos</i>	“One thirty-three, let’s go.”	Phawaq passes finish line for 600 meters
39.		<i>Tenemos que superar treinta y cinco</i>	“We have to beat thirty-five.”	Invocation of target metric
40.		<i>Vamos dos treinta y cinco Phawaq</i>	“Let’s go for two thirty-five Phawaq.”	
41.		<i>Fuerte con todo</i>	“Strong, with everything.”	
42.		<i>Vamos uno cuarenta y ocho</i>	“Let’s go one forty-eight.”	Rumi & Tika approach finish line
43.	Marta	<i>[Allí esta Tika vamos ya</i>	“There you go Tika, let’s go.”	
44.	Idalberto	<i>[Llega [llega llega</i>	“Arrive arrive arrive.”	Rumi passes finish line for 600 meters

45.	Huayra	<i>Vamos [Rumi</i>	“Let’s go Rumi.”	
46.	Idalberto	<i>Uno cincuenta y dos</i>	“One fifty-one.”	
47.		<i>Falta un minuto</i>	“One minute left.”	Invocation of target metric
48.		<i>Uno cincuenta y cinco</i>	“One fifty-five.”	Tika passes finish line for 600 meters



Figure 4-8: Delivery of target metrics at the turn into the final laps

In the final lap, there is another marked upsurge in intensity and urgency, as the athletes move through the far side curve and onto final straightaway to cement their control times. The seconds are delivered back to them from moment to moment [56, 59], the passage of time vocalized between staccato slaps of metal cleats against the asphalt. Onlookers begin to contemplate whether Phawaq will in fact achieve the metric laid before him; some doubt it [51, 52] though staff members chide their thinking [54]. As Phawaq hurdles down the straightaway, his movements become the evaluated objects of stance-act chains that ricochet across turns, and the spectators applaud his effort in the final steps before the finish line [60-65].

This is the moment in which performances actual and possible converge, when an athlete reaches the impersonal being that is their pace setter. Here, on the cusp of crystallizing a new social fact, there is a full externalization of presumed inward states—a scrunching of the face, a baring of the teeth, a closing of the eyes in what appears to be a battle of will against the organismal impulse to slow down, to cease, to obey the pain. This hypertrophic ritual of densely regimented cross-modal sign behavior, including volume surges²⁸ and group targeting of individual addressees, creates a multimodal texture of anticipation, of the moment being just-within-reach, a chasing of a new horizon, a future self, a materialization of temporality, as if the new record were so close one could chase it down.

49.	Idalberto	<i>Vamos con todo</i>	“Let’s go, with everything.”	
50.		<i>Ya Phawaq</i>	“Now Phawaq.”	
51.	Daniel	<i>Phawaq ha prendido todo</i>	“Phawaq has turned everything on.”	Phawaq takes curve to straightaway
52.	Marta	<i>Esta moriendo=</i>	“He’s dying.”	Phawaq’s form begins to break
53.	Huayra	<i>=Se murió</i>	“He died.”	
54.	Idalberto	<i>Ya</i>	“Now.”	
55.	Daniel	<i>No ni creas ah</i>	“Hey, don’t believe that, eh.”	
56.	Idalberto	<i>Ahora los brazos</i>	“Now the arms.”	
57.		<i>Dos veinte</i>	“Two twenty.”	
58.		<i>Ahora ahora Phawaq</i>	“Now, now Phawaq.”	
59.		<i>Los brazo vamos</i>	“The arms, let’s go.”	
60.		<i>Dos veinte seis</i>	“Two twenty-six.”	
61.		<i>Con todo Phawaq</i>	“With everything Phawaq.”	
62.		<i>[Con todo los brazos</i>	“With everything, the arms.”	
63.	Daniel	<i>[Eso</i>	“That’s it.”	
64.	Marta	<i>[Vamos vamos vamos</i>	“Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go.”	
65.	Daniel	<i>Todo bien [vas bien</i>	“Everything, good, you’re going well.”	
66.	Marta	<i>[Sigue</i>	“Keep going.”	
67.	Idalberto	<i>Con todo treinta y cinco</i>	“With everything, thirty-five.”	
68.		<i>Treinta y seis</i>	“Thirty-six.”	

69.		<i>Treinta y siete</i>	“Thirty-seven.”	Phawaq passes finish line for 1000 meters.
70.		<i>Muy bien Phawaq treinta y nueve</i>	“Very good Phawaq thirty-nine.”	
71.	Daniel	<i>¿Dos treinta y nueve?!</i>	“Two thirty-nine?! ”	
72.		<i>Que bestia</i>	“What a beast!”	

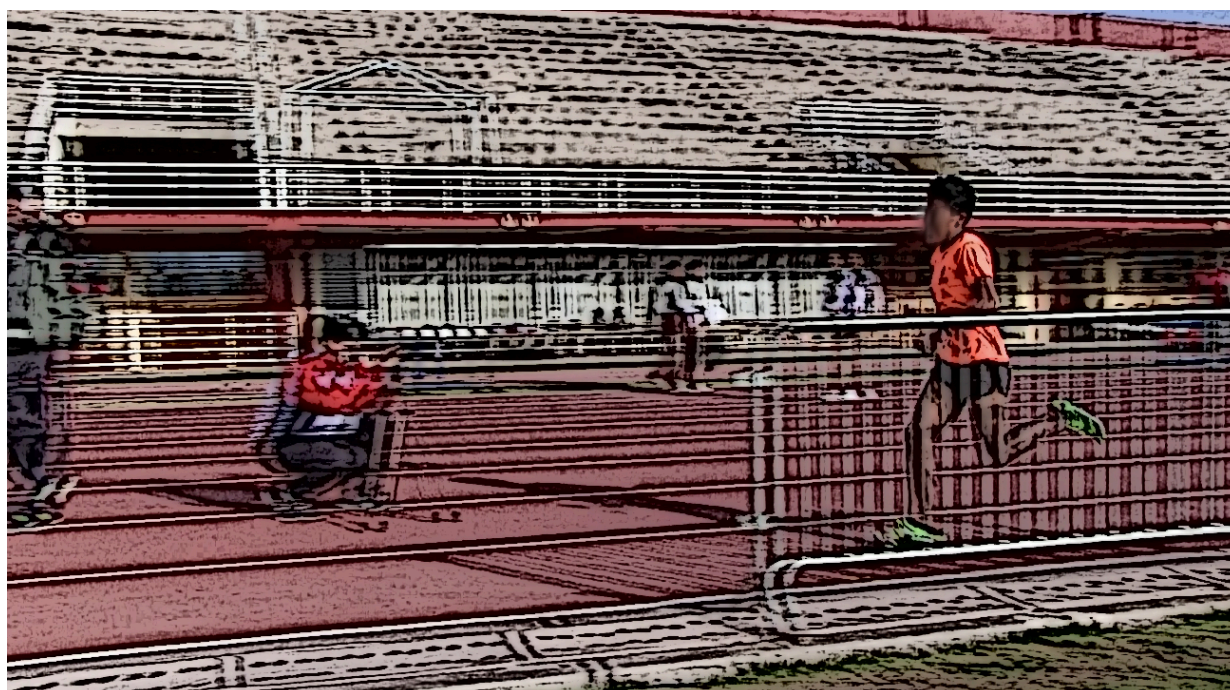


Figure 4-9: Crescendo of volume in the final sprint. Athletes fully externalize fatigue

Upon arriving to the finish, Phawaq solidifies a new reference mark for the training staff, who evaluate his output enthusiastically, a “beast” unleashed on the track [69-71]. The heightened emotional energy and urgency for setting new benchmarks ushers in Phawaq’s colleagues, who arrive on his heels to ritually invoke the closure of the moment in the passage from the finish line to the warm-up area, where athletes will cool down and debrief with their coach.

73.	Idalberto	<i>Dos cuarenta y siete</i>	“Two forty-seven.”	Rumi approaches the finish line
74.		<i>Dos cincuenta</i>	“Two fifty.”	

75.		<i>Con todo con todo</i>	“With everything, with everything.”	
76.		<i>Los brazos</i>	“The arms.”	
77.		<i>Dos cincuenta y siete</i>	“Two fifty-seven.”	
78.		<i>Vamos [tres minutos</i>	“Let’s go, three minutes.”	
79.	Daniel	<i>[Vamos Rumi vamos</i>	“Let’s go Rumi, let’s go.”	
80.	Idalberto	<i>Llega llega llega</i>	“Arrive, arrive, arrive.”	
81.		<i>Tres zero seis llega</i>	“Three zero six, arrive.”	Rumi passes the finish line for 1000 meters.
82.	Daniel	<i>Vamos Liz</i>	“Let’s go Tika.”	Tika approaches the finish line
83.	Idalberto	<i>Los brazos Tika</i>	“The arms Tika.”	
84.		<i>Vamos termina=</i>	“Let’s go, finish.”	
85.	Marta	<i>=Vamos termina</i>	“Let’s go, finish.”	
86.		<i>Vamos vamos</i>	“Let’s go, let’s go.”	Tika passes the finish line for 1000 meters.



Figure 4-10: The huddle re-congregates en route to the warm-up area

From the moment the final competing foot passes the finish, there is an immediate cessation of tension. Smiles and sighs of relief crop up between heavy, recuperating breaths, while the interactional huddle migrates back again to the warm-up zone. One senses a weight lifted in the wake of their exertion. The crew goes about stretching while discussing their final

times. Obligations and expectations congeal in a lap-by-lap postmortem, as Phawaq and company stand by, warm-up suits back on and cleats back off, while Idalberto relays and analyzes metrics. They are smiling but shy in the face of their performance review; one now witnesses the weight of the metrics themselves bearing down upon them.



Figure 4-11: Post-control debrief and analysis of metrics

1.	Idalberto	<i>¿Cual era tu mejor marca en mil metros Phawaq?</i>	What was your best time in one thousand meters Phawaq?
2.	Phawaq	<i>Nunca he hecho prof</i>	I've never done it before.
3.	Idalberto	<i>¿!Nunca habías hecho mil metros?! Pero ayy mamacita.</i>	You had never done one thousand meters?! Ayyy mamacita!
4.	Mayu	<i>Para la siguiente esa la tiene que mejorar</i>	Next time you'll have to beat that one.
5.	Idalberto	<i>No, seguro. Ahora en cuatro semanas mas tiene que volver a mejorar eso. Correr ya dos treinta y siete. Aunque sea dos treinta y ocho</i>	Well, of course. In four weeks more he has to come back and beat that one. Run two thirty-seven. Even if its two thirty-eight.
6.	Mayu	<i>Entonces tiene que ser uno cinco cada vuelta</i>	So it has to be one five each lap.
7.	Idalberto	<i>No, uno cinco no tiene que ser uno tres uno cuatro máximo. En el primero pasó un minuto. Esta bien.</i>	No, not one five it has to be one three one four maximum. In the first he passed a minute. That's good.
8.	Rumi	<i>¿Y el segundo?</i>	And the second?
9.	Idalberto	<i>Uno cinco uno seis. Bueno la primera fue casi uno uno no? Pasó uno cero cero ochenta y cuatro. Después pasó con uno treinta y tres el seis cientos. Dos cero seis.</i>	One five one six. Well the first was almost one one, no? He passed one zero zero eighty-four. Next he passed with one thirty three for the six hundred. Two zero six. There he ran

		<i>Allá corrió a lo mejor de unos...uno cuatro y pico uno cinco debe haber corrido. Pero todavía el ritmo de uno cuatro es ritmo de cuatro minutos.</i>	maybe...one four and a bit, one five he will have run. But still with one four that's a four-minute rhythm [on the coast].
--	--	--	--

The numbers are turned into public facts by this authority figure, who sketches before the athletes a model of their training progression. The group collectively distributes the effort into chunks scaled to distance, inferring a working rhythm that is established as a new target “to best” at the next control. Seated in the shade, Idalberto relays his final assessment of Phawaq’s control, invoking the same eco-chronotopic calibration that Nina solicited before him: *“Now, with that partial here you can do it in two forty in Lima and run four minutes. If here you run two thirty-nine, in Lima you do two thirty-nine two forty as well with no problem, with what you’ve already done you’re in conditions for running four minutes. Look how easy²⁹.”* Extrapolating an upper bound of four minutes from Phawaq’s “partial” control, Idalberto stipulates he is in shape to begin shaving seconds from that hypothesized benchmark at Lima, where can be reliably expected to do with ease the same numbers he has just posted at high altitude. Phawaq, in turn, is content. *“My coach inspirited me, he motivated me with his words. I feel I am going to have an extraordinary level.”³⁰*

Table 4-2: Communicative activity throughout control

Warm-up	Take-off (300m)	Straight-away (0m)	Near-Curve (100m)	Distal-Straightaway (200m)	Far-Curve (300m)	Finish (100m)	Cool down
Decreased chatter, Warm-up suits, Training shoes	Silence among onlookers, Removal of outer garments, Change to competition shoes	Maximum contact with coach/others ‘Alentar’	Delivery of metrics, Invocation of target times	Valley of cueing, Coach addresses athletes exclusively	Resurgence of group cueing	Volume crescendo, Second-by-second delivery of final time.	Post-control analysis, Stretches, Re-don warmups, Change to training shoes.

For athletes and coaches, maximum sociality and communicative scaffolding confront the maximum effort of the *control*, enlivening the training body to a semiotic catalysis in the training center. As in the recruitment trials before, this communicative apparatus cleaves the performance space into the constituent parts of a tightly delimited spatiotemporal envelope that “freeze the chronotope of independently occurrent and experienced social eventhood in a structure of likeness that is based on the nature of texts in relation to their contexts of occurrence” (Silverstein 2005 p.8). Here is a plethora of parallelisms across the discourse chunks of each control lap: latching and overlap clumped at moments of greatest physical proximity, cross-turn lexicon-syntactic parallelism between the technical team, a distal cueing reserved for the head coach; all culminating in a pulse of sign activity that boomerangs athletes through the distal curves and back to the finish line. On the heels of the test are poetic contrasts among paired deictic expressions in post-control debriefing and competition prognostication, a further emplacement of the trial in the temporal trajectory of the athlete.

Although “something about the textual—and contextual—qualities of two events is “equivalent,” bespeaking likeness, direct or tropic, in the form of aligned discursive structures” (*ibid*), the likeness that obtains across the *control* events foregrounds one crucial difference between them: the downward trajectory of time. Each control is fractionally incongruent from its predecessors: the metric improves—or perhaps it worsens—and this cross-evental fluctuation in its trend downwards is construed as the “logical progression” of which coaches talk. The reference marks achieved in the chain of controls are woven together as “virtual models” (Agha 2007 p.72 *et passim*) that reflexively typify the relations among them. They are scaffolded in spanning material assemblage of watches, demarcated and standardized distances and times,

notebooks, progress reports, as well as by athletic governing bodies, to tether together the eco-chronotopes of high altitude and coast. On the one hand is a metricalization of cues, the metered, felt repetitions in the proximal and distal zones of the track, which scaffold the revolutions around the compound circuit in a poetic pragmatic structure. On the other is the metricalization of controls in broad time, the competition repetitions across ecologies that scaffold revolutions around the competition circuit in same.

4.6 Environmental Shocks Trouble Hypothesized Futures



Figure 4-12: Cusco coaches assemble with coaches from across Peru at the national championship in Lima

Relocated out of the *Sports Village* during its ongoing remodeling for the 2019 sPan-American Games, Phawaq, Nina, and Anka push through the heat and smog of Lima's urban summer at the *Jose Galvez* Municipal Stadium in Barranco while a cadre of national coaches pack onto the corners of the asphalt to cue them. At the national track-and-field championship the three win handily in their respective events, each liberated from the weighted vest of their high-altitude training protocols, all predictably shaving seconds off their high-altitude times to

cement victory and procure ongoing support at the training center for the foreseeable future. But despite the many national medals accrued, not all the travelers succeed. After migrating from the village of *Wasi* to Cusco, Chaki, the prodigious runner-up Julio located during a recruitment mission in the provinces, stumbles upon descending to Lima for his very first time with the team. In the competition, Chaki looks like a champion for the first two laps of the 1500 meters flat. His stride is long and his torso upright, like during his recruitment. He looks like he belongs at the front of the pack. But by the penultimate lap he is noticeably uncomfortable, his gait seemingly affected by an injury. In the final lap he is quickly left behind by the other competitors. Dejected after his underwhelming performance, Chaki ruminates aloud en route to the airport the following day: *“I saw them, better than me, I saw them train like this, they were training more than me. It made me a little bit jealous³¹.”* Wishing for a chance to have begun training at a younger age, like his victorious peers who entered the center in Cusco before him, he describes a temporal fantasy: *“Sometimes I wish I could go back, maybe backwards,”* he says, *“that my age were a little less, I mean, to better participate, just like them³².”*

What has gone wrong? Of what is Chaki’s dejection the outcome? The blunt reality for both athletes and coaches is that problems can arise upon descent that *decalibrate* training and competition. In the performance center, athletes and coaches focus on two axes of improvement. On the one hand, from the high-altitude training center to coastal competitions, as well as from session to session in training blocks that lead up to competitions on the other. Critically, athletes must learn to accommodate the transition from high to low altitude competitive arenas, for the migration commonly causes performance problems. Some are made painfully aware of the hiccups that stymie this calibration, like Huayra for her 2017 World Cross Country Championship performance in Kampala, Uganda. Back in the coaches office and pouring over

numbers, Idalberto chides Huayra after a chance encounter with her competition metrics from some years before:

- Idalberto: Look at that, forty third place in the world championship. What barbarity! *Mira para allá, el lugar cuarenta y tres en el mundial. ¡Que barbaridad!*
- Huayra: What barbarity. *Que barbaridad.*
- Idalberto: You ran twenty-one forty-four. If you had run twenty-one thirty-two like you had run **here**, with those ten or twelve seconds faster you **would have** placed seven, eight slots above. Surely. But there you were with your hemoglobin nonsense, I don't know what, and anyway. Those twelve seconds **would have** meant, maybe, that forty third place would have been thirty third. And my prognosis was that she would locate herself between twenty and thirty. *Corriste veintiuno cuarenta y cuatro. Si hubieses corrido veintiuno treinta y dos como habías corrido **acá**, con esos diez o doce segundos mas rápidos, te **hubieses** ubicado siete, ocho puestos mas abajo. Al seguro. Pero allí tu estabas con tu tontera de hemoglobina, no se que cosa, y ya. Esos doce segundos **hubiesen** significado, quizás, el puesto cuarenta y tres hubiese sido treinta y tres. Y mi pronóstico era que se ubicara entre el veinte y el treinta.*

Here, in the possible world of an accurate “prognostication” that Idalberto musters with the appropriate ‘if-then’ constructions, Huayra reliably runs the mark she established for herself at high-altitude—21:44, like she ran “here” in Cusco—at the lower elevation in Kampala. In this alternate world, she achieves a final standing seven or eight places improved from the final rank she walked away with. The difference between worlds is, as Idalberto indicates, twelve seconds: twelve seconds between the “barbarity” of a poor finish and a world-level performance marginally out of the “prognosticated” parameters.

This zone of uncertainty, between prognostication and outcome, provokes a creeping anxiety among many in the compound. Just like Phawaq, who relives the frustration of an injured

knee in a past control while preparing for another in the present, Huayra herself speaks bluntly of battles calibrating her training and competition performances throughout her time at the center:

- Huayra: *Cuando entre después de unos meses empezaba a mejorar pero así, **mejore** como que les iban a **alcanzar** a los mayores que ya estaban acá, y luego **baje**, me lesione la rodilla y empece a **bajar**. Pero ya en 2013 ya no podía correr.* When I entered, after a few months I began to **improve** a lot, I **improved** so much I was **catching up** to the elders who were already here, and then I **dropped**, I injured my knee and I began to **drop**. But in 2013 I could hardly run anymore.
- Andrew: *¿Te lesionaste?* You injured yourself?
- Huayra: *Según me dice mi entrenador es que **entrenaba bien**, pero cuando llegaba la **competencia** no corría bien. Pero si me daba cuenta que no corría bien porque me sacaban una vuelta las chicas de acá. Estaba como que parecía a Chiri. Pero a mi solo me puse en la **competencia**. Y no en el entreno, porque en el entreno si le metía todo. Y mi entrenador empezó a decir que tu puedes, esto y aquello, me empezaba a presionar entonces, empezaba a mejorar desde allí.* According to what my coach tells me it's that I **trained** well, but when the **competition** arrived I didn't run well. But I realized that I didn't run well because the girls here were lapping me. I was like similar to Chiri. But it only happened to me **in competition**, because **in training** I gave it everything. And my coach began to tell me "yes, you can," this and that, he began to put more pressure on me, I began to improve from then on.

Typifying her passage from one performance space to another, Huayra self-ascribes a competitive blockage that stands in inverse relation to the intensity her training, where she consistently "gave everything" but bore nor fruit when medals were on the line. Likening herself to her plateauing colleague, Chiri, she contextualizes her faltering vis-a-vis other women in the center, woman who began to lap her whereas before they typically could not keep up with her.

These discrepancies can be attributed to several problems. Consider for example the hemoglobin level of resident athletes, a blood proxy for competition readiness typically found in elevated saturations among high-altitude natives (see Bigham 2013; Mujika et al 2019). There are athletes in the training center who, upon entrance, complete preliminary biometric testing and

register hemoglobin levels that, in the words of coach Rene, “*prognosticate the ability to compete at the world level.*”³³ But the value is dependent on all the quotidian metabolic processes of athletic training: proper nutrition, proper rest, proper iron levels, the elimination of food borne parasites. Huayra’s underwhelming world championship performance was ascribed, in part, to her suffering hemoglobin level, and thus the value is no guarantee of success.

Even more widespread is the problem of brusque climactic shifts in the down migration to coastal competition. “*The disadvantage also is that at high altitude it is much colder, whereas on the coast it is much hotter, it’s much more humid,*”³⁴ explains Rene. The discrepant environments, between the dry and thin air of Cusco and the humid coast provokes for many in the center an “*environmental shock*” (*choque ambiental*) that sneaks up on greener athletes who travel to lower elevations for the first time, hopscotching between ecologies and between political realms of rural hinterlands and urban metropolis. For almost all in the training center who arrive to sea-level Lima to compete in track and field tournaments it is the first travel out of the department of Cusco in their lives, and they describe the environmental changes as overwhelming and difficult to manage. Recalling her first visit to the coastal capital, Nina describes the palpable change in the air, which felt “*thick, like honey*” (*espeso, como miel*). Qoyllur concurs: “*the climate shocked me, for the drop in altitude and the heat. I felt the heat shocked me strongly for the oxygen it had. Very heavy.*”³⁵ Chaki, reflecting on his competition trouble, remembers feeling “submerged” (*sumergido*) in the “smoke and cold” (*humo y frio*) of the capital, caught between the clouds and the track. It is striking to note that Qoyllur, Nina, and Chaki would call the very air that is expected to enhance their performance upon descent to sea-level “heavy”: if the training effect of such a descent is likened to shedding a weighted vest you

did not know you were carrying by coaches, it is, in inverse fashion, described as akin to donning a weighted vest by athletes themselves.

Air is not the only trouble, however. Far more common are the nagging injuries that come with the transition to programmed training, the shock of translating the somatic geography of the countryside to the regimented activity of the urban facility. Despite their “natural” development via long commutes and laboring in the fields, many athletes arriving to the compound struggle to overcome the adaptive pains of moving to planned twice-daily sessions. Like Phawaq, who injured himself shortly after beginning his first training block, Qoyllur recalls the adaptive jolt of beginning his trials on the track in Cusco:

“When I arrived here the training shocked me the first two weeks. I was fatigued, everything hurt, as I had not conducted a directed, planned training before. I arrive here and I begin to improve enormously unlike the others, but a grand disadvantage of mine was that I injured myself rapidly for the very reason that I had not carried out a structured training process, you know³⁶?”

The spasms of adaptive shock are, in many cases, ascribed to technological changes in training modality. Recall the bare foot of rural recruits, treated as a competitive edge by scouts on recruitment missions looking for cross-country favorites to best their urban peers (see chapter two). In the transition from cooler high-altitude arenas to humid coast, the bare foot frustrates younger entrants to the performance center who encounter trouble at their feet when they begin their professional sporting careers. Training on a makeshift track on a sloped *pampa*, weaving between white lines laid in white dirt extracted from surrounding mountains, Qoyllur first qualified for the national championship in Lima as a youngster. There, competing against the best qualifying endurance runners from all the schools Peru, he faltered, stifled by the heat of the climate, the thick air at the lower altitude, and the blisters that covered his bare feet as he

competed on a hard track for the first time. Qoyllur, on the cusp of formalizing his entrance into the Performance Center, encountered this very obstacle:

“I ran barefoot, I was getting blisters all over my feet because of the heat in 1500 meters. For five kilometers I bought myself some shoes, I didn’t even know what they were at that time. I bought more or less the lightest in order to run. And worse! My feet heated up, and that was that. There were kids that already ran there that won, as they were already adapted.”³⁷

Chaki’s commentary on his competition troubles resembles that of his elder peer. “Screwed” (*jodido*), he tells me weeks after returning from Lima, “shoes burn too much” (*sapatu nishuta rupan*); his foot was blistered in ways he had never experienced before. “To change to this style of shoe from one moment to the next has been extremely uncomfortable,”³⁸ he laments.

Qoyllur’s and Chaki’s reflections on purchasing and wearing their first pair of shoes for the track-and-field championships bring into focus the worlds between which new recruits hopscotch: the cooler climes of high-altitude ecologies in the countryside, within which budding youth commute barefoot, and the humid coast, where their peers compete from an early age in running shoes. Baked into the chronotopic calibration between high altitude reference marking and competition prognostication is another adaptation, not just between the diverse climates of Peru’s mountainous geography and humid coast, but between the embodied habits of rural and urban spaces. Athletes must learn an eco-pedagogical embodiment, sometimes succumbing to its forces as they fortify themselves within and between harsh environments.

4.7 Conclusion: Translating Potential Causes Eco-Temporal Anxieties

Ruminating on the emergence of “modern” sport—from the traditional “ritual” forms of its purported origins to the highly bureaucratized and event-driven global economy of contemporary embodied contests—Allen Guttman asks: “what is a record in our modern sense?” This “marvelous abstraction,” he contends, “permits competition not only among those gathered together on the field of sport but also among them and others distant in time and space.” With respect to the record, therefore, “the Australian can compete with the Finn who died a decade before the Australian was born” (Guttman 2012 [1978] p.51-2). Put differently, the record facilitates trans-historical comparison, and so about the record converge cadres of experts authorized to compare and rank the performances of collectivities of various sizes and kinds. While during recruitment in the countryside, coaches and instructors attempt to trans-historically compare the performances of athletes of different ages and locations in the Andes, the *control* in Cusco’s center affords trans-historical self-comparisons of each resident. The “logical evolution” of their competition records populates countless crinkled pages that fill the binders in the coaches’ office, non-debatable facts relayed in the training center’s quarterly progress reports to Lima. In a training space designed for maximum performance in endurance contests, personal records drive every step on the asphalt.

Regional or world records of the many different events across sports discipline scaffold transnational comparisons, relations that come to be hotly contested in widely anticipated sports mega-events. And where contests backed by millions in investments and viewed by millions of spectators go, so follow efforts to enhance performance at all costs, leading to “dirty” races and (sometimes) ensuing sanctions (Savulescu 2016). If exposed, a record set on the power of banned substances is nulled, quintessentially unlike another set without such aids. But is an endurance

record set after passage from high-altitude to the coast the same as one trained for and set at sea-level through and through? This chapter has argued that metrics purporting to objectively measure the highly contextualized movements of athletes are distributed in wide-spanning trans-ecological competition infrastructures, and that records are not only quantifications of individual embodied performances, but also indexes—material traces—of the ecologies in which they transpire, of the task-specific constraints and possibilities that obtain in different ecological mediums.

Quantification creates the possibility of historical comparison, both for individuals and among them, yet records sit at the juncture of multiple intersecting temporal arcs. Eco-chronotopic calibration in the training center attempts to maximize an ecological differential between space-times, to build a competitive future out of organized passage between them. The athletic programming that organizes this passage, as a process of “authoritative virtual modeling” (Agha 2007), links periodized training sessions in “deictic chains” (*ibid*), cumulative sequences of actions across broad time and within ecologically inflected temporalities. These chains scaffold an emergent model of the progress of an athlete, an ecopolitical embodiment of work (c.f. Le Devedec 2019) that passes through “multiple drafts” (Enfield & Sidnell 2017 p.523) within which control times become objects of meta-semiotic typification among experts and athletes alike, each looking for trends that prognosticate success or foretell failure in spatialized air.

For coaches who bemoan Peru’s standing among its peer nations—its stymied infrastructural development and hurdles to “catch up” to other countries with much larger populations and much better development recruitment technologies (see chapter two)—eco-chronotopic calibration is another specie of channeling. The athlete’s body— “a complex

topological configuration admitting to the continual interchange of materials across its intricately folded surfaces” (Ingold 2020 p.5)—enters the channel between high and low-altitude ecologies, immersed in and incorporating into itself (Mol & Law 2004) changing airs for the purported performance enhancing effects that obtain between them. Passage through this channel is another maneuver by coaches and bureaucrats who maximize national resources; not just national populations but also national *ecologies*, which promise reward for journeys through them, provided one can endure the pain and breathlessness of doing so. But passage through ecologies—simply moving from one to another—is hardly enough. The body is conveyed through this channel by densely regimented semiotic labor, which strings movement into sequences leading to peak performance; word and body entangle in Cusco en route to Lima. Properly executed, the cues of controls become “transduced” signs (Keane 2013), dissipating air turned into tightened muscle and postured limbs.

Sometimes after passage comes the euphoria of sensing progress, the swelling of pride and the strengthening of commitment to the regimen. At other times comes creeping anxiety about physical longevity and degradation through injury. In describing their temporal anxieties with regard to training and competition, Chaki, Huayra, Phawaq, as well as many others in the training center recapitulate the anxiety of their coaches: they narrate their struggles with and against time, be it as remorse for losing time to injuries and thus faltering on the competition stage, or discouragement in the face of lost time after entering a regimented training program after peers who may have had a head start; Chaki, newly arrived and still green, has not been wrapped in the communicative webs of programming like his colleagues, and falters on the coast accordingly. Yet these anxieties can provoke behavioral troubles off the track, and the training

center is therefore organized to channel disciplinary behavior along specific tracks for its appropriate management, a struggle to which I turn next.

¹ Small, weighted sticks to improve technical placement of arms in stride.

² In that Acosta “pled” to an “Indian” (*ibid*) with whom he was traveling to help keep him atop his horse, the passage also reveals his porter was adapted to high altitude and passed unperturbed by such side effects. Acosta continues to mention that the effects of this passage are far worse for those ascending from sea-level than for those descending to the coast, and thus provides one of the earliest accounts of high-altitude acclimation, the very affordance the athletes in the training enter would come to leverage centuries later.

³ For examples of how the stakes of “exceeding” one’s humanity (Issanchou et al 2018) can be high look to Lance Armstrong’s catastrophic doping scandal after the 2006 Tour de France, or the Congressional hearings on steroids that rocked American baseball in the 2000s (Fainaru-Wada & Williams 2006).

⁴ If Silverstein “extended Jakobson extension of poetics with “metrical arrays of linguistic text” (Lempert 2018 p.124)—and Lempert thereafter extended it further into co-speech manual gesture—here I extend it into the embodied cultivation of sports pedagogy.

⁵ “*Por la misma característica de la altura, por supuesto que vas a encontrar prácticamente un desarrollo aeróbico natural.*”

⁶ “*Con el propósito de poder formar a los chicos en pruebas de fondo, en lo que Peru más destaca en atletismo, el CAR Cusco podríamos decir que fue diseñado para disciplinas que necesiten una resistencia, o un entrenamiento en hipoxia, para que ellos puedan desarrollarse mejor.*”

⁷ This preoccupation with technologies operating independently of the athlete resonates in arguably the most studied controversy of sports enhancement: the case of the South African sprinter Oscar Pistorius. When the double-amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius began to defeat even his “able-bodied” peers, courts disqualified him by ascribing an unfair advantage to his knee-down carbon polymer ‘Cheetah’ blades (Marcellini et al 2012). Newspapers buzzed with accusations of ‘techno-doping’, claiming that Pistorius, who underwent a double amputation as a child, gained an extra-human advantage, one that “restored” him beyond the “normal” corporeal possibilities of a “natural” human. Conversations cropped up about whether athletes might willingly amputate their own limbs to incorporate new technologies for a competitive edge (Besnier & Brownell 2019). This quest to disambiguate the ‘natural’ talent of elite athletes from technological embellishments leads Issanchou to argue that “the ultimate aim of the technologization of competitions may well be to render the comparison of performances clearer, more secure, more fair, in short more significant. But it can only achieve this objective on the condition of remaining veiled and unthought-of as an entity” (Issanchou et al 2018, p.691). Pistorius’ highly transparent biotechnological modifications, ones that many claimed exceeded his humanity, did not and could not remain veiled.

⁸ “*Como correr con chaleco.*”

⁹ “*En la costa se te saca, y ya, explosion.*”

¹⁰ “*Utilizamos capacidades físicas y una línea de regresión para poder calcular cuanto aproximadamente podría ser el VO2.*”

¹¹ *Villa Deportiva.*

¹² Cardiopulmonary Exercise Testing

¹³ “*Para calcular el intercambio que hay de CO2 con el intercambio que hay de oxígeno*”

¹⁴ “*Definitivamente, en altura es un medio ideal para entrenar los chicos en este tipo de modalidad, de fondo, medio fondo, 5mil 10mil etcetera.*”

¹⁵ “*Si tu por ejemplo corres 10k, si tu quieres correr en 28 minutos se supone que acá en Cusco lo deberías correr en 30 minutos. Mas o menos hay una **marca de referencia** en altitud,*”

¹⁶ “*Ritmo de costa.*”

¹⁷ “*¿Tu mejor marca **acá** cuanto era?*”

¹⁸ “*Lo que mas amo son mis piernas. Admiro mis piernas. Tengo esa fuerza.*”

¹⁹ “*No se quemá.*”

²⁰ “Se hace mas o menos cada dos meses para reajustar el ritmo del trabajo.”

²¹ “Prognosticar ritmo de costa.”

²² “Tiene que haber habido por lógico una evolución,”

²³ “Me chocó. Pasando los días a los entrenos no me acomodé tanto, se me vino lesiones horribles y me impidieron al entrenar. Estuve parado casi dos meses, en ese tiempo perdí muchas competencias por culpa de las lesiones que tuve. Justo en un control. En un control de obstáculos, la rodilla, corriendo nomas. Poco a poco sentía el dolor y se avanzó mucho.”

²⁴ “Los que están ahora recién acá, la diferencia es abysmal. Esos chicos no tienen una gota de coordinación. ¿Por que? Porque nunca han trabajado nada de coordinación en su colegio ni en la educación física, ni nadie se ha preocupada nada por esas cosas. Entonces cuando llegan acá, llegan al cero. ¿Que tienen? Su capacidad aeróbica, quizás el talento para poder hacerlo, pero no conocen, no tienen ni lo mas mínimo conocimiento. Yo me acuerdo de Huayra, cuando llegó acá, no podía hacer un abdominal ni una plancha. ¡No hacia una! ¿Y hoy? Una atleta que ya tiene dos mundiales. Tiene octavo lugar en un mundial de menores. Tiene cuantas medallas suramericanas.”

²⁵ Some have looked to haptic feedback and the sense of touch for intersubjective calibration to gain access to pain (Throop 2012) or instruct embodied action (Barker 2019). But although endurance running coaches occasionally use touch to scaffold movements, in the end athletes are on their own on the track, and language is the principal communicative mean with which coaches “reach” them from afar.

²⁶ “Nos da una fuerza cuando nos grita.”

²⁷ “Siempre hay una fuerza que te dice que avances mas. Y sigues dándole.”

²⁸ Reminiscent of Feld’s (1988) “lift-up-over sounding”, an acoustic texture that iconically reproduces the athlete’s exertion.

²⁹ “Uno treinta y tres cuarenta y dos el seis cientos. El ocho cientos dos cero seis. Dos treinta y nueve cero siete. Ya con ese parcial acá puedes pasarla en dos cuarenta en Lima y correr cuatro minutos. Si acá corres dos treinta y nueve en Lima pasas dos treinta y nueve dos cuarenta también sin problema, ya con lo que has hecho ya estas en condiciones de correr cuatro minutos. Mira así de fácil.”

³⁰ “Me alentó mi entrenador, me motivo con sus palabras. Siento que voy a tener un nivel extraordinario.”

³¹ “Les vi mejores que yo, les vi entrenar así, entrenaban mas que yo. Me daba un poco de envidia.”

³² “Quisiera a veces volver así, quizás atrás, que mi edad sea un poco menor, digo así no, para mejor estar participando igual que ellos.”

³³ “Prognostica el poder competir a nivel mundial.”

³⁴ “La desventaja también es que en la altura hace mucho frío, a diferencia en la costa hace más calor, más humedad hay.”

³⁵ “La clima me chocó, por la altura mas baja y el calor. Sentía que el calor me chocaba mas fuerte por el oxígeno que tenía. Muy pesado.”

³⁶ “Cuando llegue acá el entrenamiento si me choco las primeras dos semanas, tenía fatiga, me dolía todo, como no había llevado un entrenamiento dirigido planificado anteriormente. Llego acá y empiezo a mejorarme descomunamente a la diferencia de los demás, pero una gran desventaja mía era que yo me lesionaba muy rápido por el mismo hecho que no cumplía con el proceso del entrenamiento bien estructurado ¿no?”

³⁷ “Corría descalzo, me sacaba también ampolla por todo los pies con el mismo calor en mil quintos. Para cinco mil me compre unas zapatillas, ni siquiera conocía en ese entonces. Compre mas o menos que sean livianos para correr. Y peor! Me calenté el pie y nada. Habían muchachos que ya corrían allí y han ganado, como estaban adaptados ya.”

³⁸ “Cambiarne a este estilo de zapatilla, de un momento a otro ha side may incómodo.”

Chapter 5 : Corralling Talent

5.1 Introductory Vignette: A Blessing of the Athletes on Youth Day

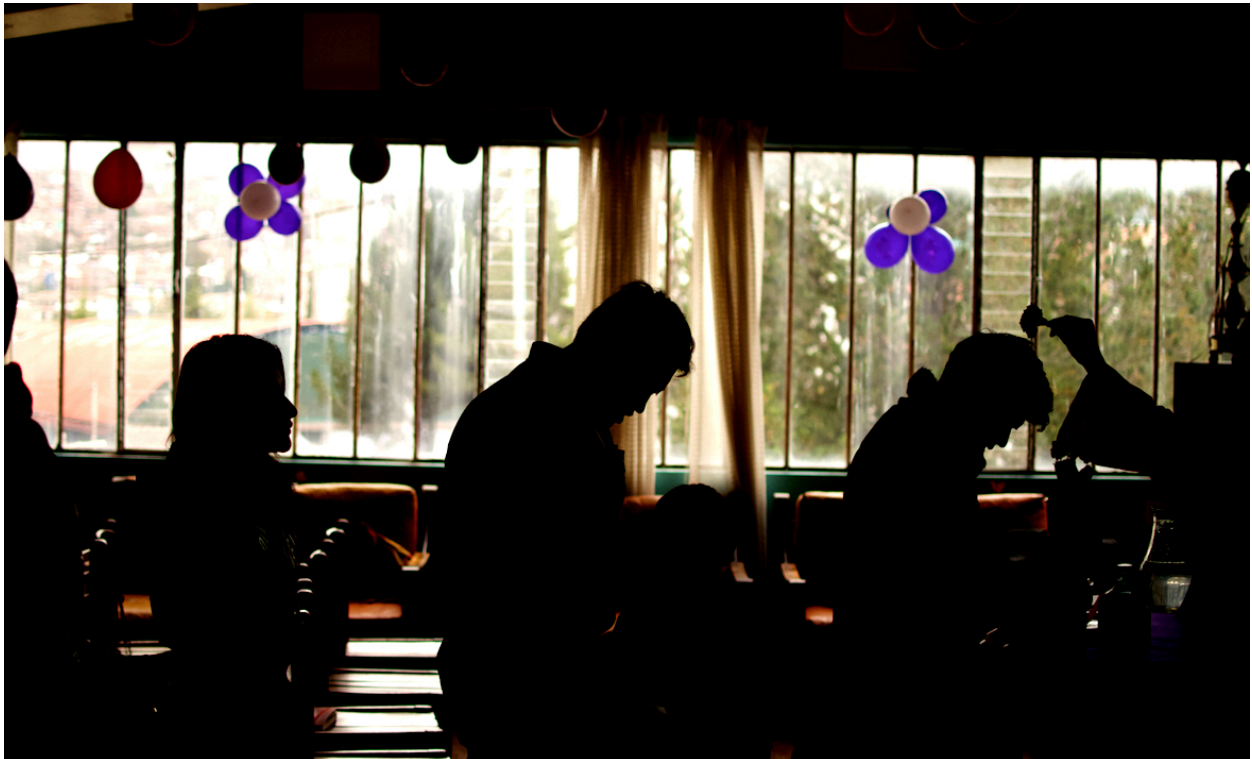


Figure 5-1: Blessing ceremony in the Performance Center on Youth Day

From the inside looking out—beyond trophies that tower above their shelving and bright balloons decking window panes in the commons, past streaked glass wet with unseasonal precipitation and pruned evergreens lining soggy grounds, beyond the rain-slick roofs of the national hospital and the *Universidad Nacional de San Antonio del Abad de Cusco*, to buildings that accrete like stalagmites on the horizon—all growth is vertical: rebar, *ladrillo*, concrete,

corrugated sheeting, paint, buzz saws, lumber, ceramic, a city that seethes and reaches for birthing clouds. Unfinished houses are replete with cracks into which unanticipated water seeps, barriers penetrated by the elements until remittances enable patching up. Roads transect valley sides across which meander delivery trucks in zig-zag descent, linking vendor from mountain crest to buyer in urbanized trough, food and commodities for hungry mouths and building hands.

At these altitudes, you must work¹, Anka's mother tells him. On occasional Sunday mornings the two sell cheeses at the San Pedro market when she arrives to Cusco from the provinces. Now, cobalt blue afternoon light illuminates Anka's still-wet hair. His tracksuit and training shoes are dry, replacements for wet clothes and sandals removed after returning to the dormitory before mass commenced on International Youth Day. "*Ciudaspí sapatuyuq, canputa kutimuspa usut'ayuq*", is Anka's refrain: "in the city with a shoe, returning to the countryside with a sandal," a sketch of two characters he inhabits to hopscotch between adjacent lifeworlds. "In my head there has always been a place in order to return to the villages" (*nuqaq umaypi karanpunin huq laru llaqtakunata chayanay*).

San Pedro was maximum mobility, farmers bartering and haggling, leveraging goods for gain, rows of juice vendors beside butchered animal limbs hanging in stalls, flows of weaving people and commodities from every corner of the department. An exposure entirely unlike in the training center, which is closed and streamlined, secured from the rain, traffic, and noise. The staff indulge Anka's Sunday market forays but remain cautious in their endorsement of work for residents, preferring no one deviate from nutritional plans and programmed rest days. "*We train to be the best*" says the poster beside the security gate, a constant reminder of why residents were supposed to have left their families, friends, and morning commutes behind to come to the urban hub. The reminder is positioned as if to pre-empt ideas that betray it, like Anka's: "that's why I

came, in order to leave afterwards, in order to teach my villages, my neighbors,” (*chayrayku hanpurani kayta, chaymanta llusqinaypaq, chay llaqtaykunata, o llaqtamasiykunata, chaymanta, yachachinaypaq nuqa*) he tells himself.

His blessing imminent, the invited priest consecrates the bread and wine while the technical director Tomas delivers a speech of encouragement to the youth assembled before him. Tomas has grown frustrated with breakfasts unfinished in the dining hall, with multivitamin pills left behind on the table, their powdered innards undissolved and still encased in thin, translucent conveyances. There are rumors some athletes have been escaping to eat street food in the night; *anticuchos, hamburguesas*, and *chicharron* ingested on unmonitored street corners. All stand in anticipation of Sunday’s holy comestible. The director’s words ricochet down empty corridors that recede to the dormitories on either side:

“It’s a moment in life that has to be seized upon. It’s the key moment when we are able, in our organism. It provides a richness that fortifies you in order to be able to confront this career. It helps us, for the virtues that you have in order to be able to do sport, in this case track and field, middle distance, endurance. I believe that this is the most important moment in order to be able to exploit and carry to the highest point those conditions that God has given you, in order to be able to carry them to the highest point, not only in sport, but also in all aspects of life.”²

Behind Anka stands the taller Chaki, pacing forward in the column of congregants. He has been in the center for months now, endured angry blisters on his feet, the climactic shocks of high-to-low migration, and the smart of hypertrophy from twice-daily training. “*When I arrived, it was as if in a dream³*,” he says of the night-lights lacing the valley sides, glowing orbs floating to the heavens in every direction; “*sport takes you to places you do not know, where you never imagined arriving⁴*.” He was enamored with the fields, courts, and cross-country running circuit that butt against the perimeter fence that surrounds and separates the campus from the

neighborhood. But beyond the thrill of arrival has come an ensuing realization: “*you’re always here⁵*,” Chaki says, “*in*” Cusco but fixed in circulation on the track, in the center but always looking out, towards fractured growth exploding beyond glass that encases.

Anka bows for the blessing and the Eucharist. Rainwater and holy water mingle on his hair, while sacred bread passes into organismal richness to nurture his God-given conditions. In their momentary suspension of movement, as their heads descend to receive divine drops, one cannot tell if Anka and Chaki fold at the hips to be absolved for their sins or to receive the yoke of their labor. From the outside looking in, through wet windows cleaved vertically at intervals by metal bars that do not bend, one cannot tell if the center secures or constrains, empowers or imprisons. Is this access or impasse?

5.2 Temporalizing Embodiment

Among social scientific examinations of bodily training there is a curious etymological intersection: on the one hand, Bourdieu tracks ‘training’ from the Greek ‘*askesis*’ (Bourdieu 1978 p.827), considering it a form of asceticism, of severe self-discipline via exercise for exercise’s sake; on the other hand, Mauss tracks ‘training’ from the French ‘*dressage*⁶’ (Mauss 1979) considering it “the search for, the acquisition of an efficiency” (p.77). For Mauss, trained “techniques of the body” are “series of assembled actions” inculcated in sequence and “assembled for the individual not by himself alone but by all his education, by the whole society to which he belongs, in the place he occupies in it” (p.76). Dually defined, training both inclines the body towards its own cultivation to the exclusion of worldly and carnal distractions, while at the same time corralling it in a disciplinary progression and thus extricating it from competing temporal trajectories.

Taken in juxtaposition, the technical director's speech and the words of Anka and Chaki foreground a positional discrepancy regarding this ascetic cultivation of sporting potential. Invoking "organismal riches" that "fortify" the resident athletes for their careers, Tomas, the head of the center, narrows in on a "key moment" when physical and social trajectories align in Peru's youth. This temporal intersection "facilitates" a future-building, scientifically informed sports development project based on "virtues" which enable a capacity for endurance, a program that "exploits and carries to the heights" those "God-given conditions." In contrast, Anka's morning ambling articulates with circular migration and the will to return home, his movements guided by his mother's market directive to "work at these altitudes." His forays challenge the directional flow of the infrastructure in which he resides, his migration to the compound splits in a twin embodiment: the agricultural rhythms of countryside production and their attendant dress and labor (*campupi usut'ayuq*), balanced with the professional realm of the city where shoes and track suits belong (*ciudaspi sapatuyuq*). Caught between these embodiments, a newly arrived Chaki ruminates on his mobility after passing infatuation with his relocation to Cusco, beginning to contemplate the possibilities that beckon from beyond the perimeter wall.

In the training center, athletes and administrators attempt to reconcile temporal discontinuities that obtain between their criss-crossing ambitions. Where endeavoring coaches and bureaucrats vested in Peru's sports ascendance intersect with Indigenous youth aspiring to contemporary forms of global recognition, all vie to leverage "organismal riches" for competing purposes, a tussle that prompts a series of anthropological questions regarding the ground upon which this contested body cultivation unfolds into the future: "If the future is an urgent concern, the question of common grounds for the future must be preceded by others: Whose ground is this? What is their account of this ground? How did you come to this ground? And how might

these questions shape the commonality of that which is hoped to continue?” (Valentine & Hassoun 2019 p.255). The ground of the recreational commons in which Holy Communion is distributed was arrived to, in part, by chance and happenstance, by luck on recruitment missions to the countryside and well-received performances at school games where Sports Institute scouts witnessed hidden prospects come to the surface. However, the extent to which sports development continues by new means old regimes of embodied labor invites pause.

The parallels are salient: Quechua athletes receive the Eucharist to be cultivated for their organismal potentials, a modern “defense of the Indian” (de las Casas 1992 [1552]) in yet another nucleated *reducción*, a group of Indigenous youth again tethered to land through labor, taking in the Lord to regenerate their bodily capacities, technically guided on the path to the “highest point,” a salvation not through language but physical sacrifice (Durston 2007). Coloniality and modernity entangle: a post-contact geographical and infrastructural segregation of Indigenous communities drives Quechua populations into high-altitude corners, and centuries later the ensuing somatic geography that takes hold in the highlands beckons a new infrastructure designed to *recruit* from those corners and pull back into the center of power the very bodies disqualified in the past. Colonial inquisitors have become inquisitive bureaucrats (Silverblatt 2011), proselytizers who sought to cull holy virtue from the racialized flesh of rural communities and prohibited idolatrous Quechua practices like sleeping on the ground and chewing coca leaves (Mannheim 1984; Mills 1997) have become biomedical experts tasked with sculpting the habits of Indigenous athlete-citizens. Sports developers and colonial administrators alike take the Indigenous body as a “contemporaneous” (Fabian 1983) object of knowledge.

Attending to these histories vis-a-vis feet that pivot on common ground, this chapter explores the sociopolitical realities within which high-altitude environmental affordances are

enmeshed, and spotlights attempts to keep embodied training unentangled from civilian life. To one side are the coaches and administrators tasked with maximizing biophysical development, a project that tracks chronological and training ages to render performance fluctuations into coherent, predictable timelines. To the other side are Quechua athletes, who on the verge of “ejection” (Althusser 1994) from a public-school infrastructure encounter a suite of institutional opportunities for social mobility upon arrival to their new urban environment (see Mangan 2005 for historical resonances on migration to urban hubs). In between divergent “roads to the future” (Mignolo 2011), the temptations that beckon the country net of recruitment become the bane of the city shoe that is trained to orbit the track. In between countryside and city, and in between embodiments at the crucible of the training center—a new “crucial intersection between rural and urban sociospatial environments⁷” (Seligman 1989 p.695; see also Skar 1994 on “worlds apart”)—all actively monitor body-environment boundaries while wrangling to control “what gets inside” (Roberts 2017), a selective permeability in anticipation of future success through laborious, psycho-social training. Here, where colonial reverberations meet modernist aspirations, circulating expatriate trainers and migrating Quechua youth who funnel into urban sites of power (Leinaweaver 2008) to partake of an embodied initiation that is only partially under anyone’s control.

High-altitude environments are recruited in concrete circumstances: in buildings designed to expose residents to ecological forces while simultaneously enclosing them from socio-attentional pulls. Designed to catalyze environmental and human potentials, the center in Cusco is an infrastructure that serves to “create the grounds on which other objects operate” (Larkin 2013), that is, it is built to enlist experts and novices in “form making processes” (Ingold 2010) that constitute athletes for the sporting future of the nation. Goffman would call the center a total

institution: “their encompassing or total character is symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside that is often built right into the physical plant” (Goffman 1961). It is a disciplinary institution (Foucault 1976) where daily demands for physical betterment structure intense exercise regimens and behavioral protocols. Material infrastructures that disciplinarily administer talent pools are not uncommon in the wider sporting realm; talent “farms”, like soccer academies, concentrate bodies in Africa (Darby 2010), and state athletic training facilities reproduce nationalist values in China (Brownell 1995). Peculiar here is the notion of one infrastructure couched in another—an interactional ecology couched in a high-altitude environment.

Rather than attend to a pre-analytic distinction between “built” and “natural” environments—a methodological commitment that risks recapitulating a culture-nature binary by treating bodily training as the cultural reworking of “raw” nature (see Ingold 2010, & Richardson & Weszkalnys 2014)—I approach future building in the training center as a body design process that harnesses the synergistic effects of high-altitude ecologies and body sculpting infrastructures. In the training center we find coaches and athletes “provisioning for one another the conditions of life in innumerable forms and at almost every scale” (Murphy 2016 p.435) in a race to *recorporealize*: to eliminate or modify problematic habits and behaviors while inculcating new ones through strict “body regulation” practices (Cosh et al 2012). Social theorists have described bodily habits as class markers (Bourdieu 1984) evident in conspicuous or medicinal consumption patterns (Farquhar 2002; Veblen 2007 [1899]) and etiquette (Elias 1978 [1937]), as obstacles to reflective ethical action (Camic 1986; Durkheim 1997 [1897]) and even constitutive of a work ethic and economic accumulation (Weber 1958 [1905]). Indeed, behavioral modification and bodily malleability have been longstanding areas of interest for Andeanist

scholars, who have documented reflexive changes to habits of eating and bodily comportment as well as modifications to dress and diet and changing language practices that privilege the national lingua franca, Spanish, at the expense of Quechua (see for example de la Cadena 2000; Canessa 2012; Roberts 2012; Rappaport 2014). Anka's phrasing—*city shoe, country sandal*—could well be taken to index precisely this habit disjuncture, between rural and urban worlds and the multimodal reorganizations of objects signs in the constant pivots between them.

Whereas habits are typically treated as unconscious and stubbornly resistant to change⁸, I instead analyze attempts to recorporealize Indigenous bodies as a form of frustrated “entextualization” (Silverstein & Urban 1996), or “the process of rendering a given instance of discourse a text, detachable from its local context” (Urban 1996 p.21). As I have labored to show in previous chapters, the human-environment interactions of an Andean somatic geography come to be construed as meta-pragmatic stereotypes, cultivable relations that might be targeted and recruited by a slew of communicative means and laborers. Once identified, this cultivable object is cleaved from its material surround and relocated in new material circumstances. With little formal technical instruction, Quechua athletes confront both the language of their coaches and the biomedical team, enmeshing themselves in this communicative scaffolding and its cross-context “enactment” (Mol 2002; Foucault 1990) of the training organism. Lifting countryside practices and reinserting them into the training center causes attentional pulls that stymie this regimen, for just as “the residue of past social interaction carried along with the sign vehicle” (Urban & Silverstein 1996) populates written and oral texts transmitted and translated between generations and social groups, so too do the “interactional residues” (c.f. “kinesthetic residues,” Merleau Ponty 2012 p.110 *et passim*) of countryside socialization disrupt regimented habitualization routines in the center. New recruits port a range of behavioral patterns that

frustrate bureaucratic attempts to corral their bodies and direct their training, leading to strategic communicative interventions among the training staff as they vie to temporalize their trainees' performances and regiment new nutritional and habitual ontogenoms (Mol 2013), and to counter-discourses among athletes regarding the bureaucratization of their embodied labor.

After discussing coaching attempts to battle a so-called "trampoline effect" among resident athletes who pursue other kinds of social mobility beyond the center, in the second half of this chapter I attend to athletes and coaches as they extrapolate future successes and failures from behaviors in the present through "collaborative imagining" (Murphy 2005). Coaches come to act as behavioral engineers, sketching plans and virtual models for those they are charged with leading as they identify *patterns* of behavior, sometimes deleterious, sometimes fortuitous, while monitoring "the social terrain within which those meanings are delimited, elaborated, and contained" (Murphy 2015 p.93). Athletes, in turn, learn to read those patterns as stable types that structure their own behavioral tokens, salient targets for reflexive and reflective acts of self-improvement and transformation as they pursue "the quantification and standardization of various domains of social life, and the subsequent commensuration of these quantified and standardized domains" (Kockelman 2006 p.78). In my analysis I do not presuppose a "pre-discursive" (Butler 1990) biology, but instead look to dispositional ascriptions to see how social actors tease apart temporalized embodiments according to scientifically informed criteria. Constant jockeying, between ascriptions of talent or lack thereof and characterological attribution, structures a dense communicative ecology in which bodily habits are scrutinized in the "shadow conversations" (Irvine 1996) of staff deliberations, wherein voicing contrasts (Agha 2005) create figures of personhood. These figures inform long-term training and disciplinary

procedures, as coaches and athletes ideologize performance hiccups, looking for underlying explanations of embodied phenomena that point to future triumph or failure.

5.3 Socio-attentional Pulls of Sports Migration to the Performance Center



Figure 5-2: Cross-country invitational at the Performance Center in Cusco

Wet soil sinks under eager feet; no threat of rocks that split soles here. The grounds that surround the center are an earthy textile of toe points, heel pivots, and redirections of shoes scrambling around corners on the snaking cross-country circuit. The campus is busy with bodies. Some sit on staircases waiting for their moment, others loiter on the grass, or shuttle between friends and relatives scattered and mingling under rainy season sky. Athletes from all corners of the department are assembled for the cross-country invitational, each seeking to secure a birth at the national championship in Lima. Hundreds bunk in the auxiliary dormitories at the back end of the facility. Midday *refrigerios* and water bottles circulate for competitors and their coaches.

Prospects from the November recruitment missions amble in herds, Chaki and Killa among them, eyeing the facility they might soon call home. The technical team looks on, hopeful their new contenders are on their way to formalizing the bounce from countryside to compound.

“You have to beat everyone. You have to win. They’re going to give you everything. That’s how she told me.”

After Nina encountered Sports Institute scouts in *Raymi*, performed her one-kilometer trial there, and arranged with them and her parents to travel to Cusco for the next stage of her recruitment, she bunked with an athlete who had been living in the training center for some time, who urged her to win the invitational. Nina arrived as one among many in a sea of recruits selected from recruitment missions to travel to Cusco and reproduce the results of their trials, like the competitors before her now as she unlaces her shoes. Today, against so many with so little formal training, she hardly had to exert herself: the win was expected, and while it goes acknowledged it is not celebrated by the coaches, who talk among themselves while evaluating new recruits.

At the start line, faces crunch to capture technical instruction. Little girls on the precipice of a wholly adult moment shift their weight to the forward foot, readying in anticipation of the wet wooden clack of the start board. Long hair tugged back shines, a competitive intensity to facial expressions seems oddly mismatched with bright colorful socks below. All face forward towards receding grass. *“Who knows if this will open doors for you to many things?”* asks the official beside them, offering a final word of encouragement before they hurtle ahead. What compels the little ones to participate in seizing the key moment of which the technical director spoke?

Nina wanted to win when she left from the start line years before. Win, and *earn*. Atop a stepping-stone between lifeworlds, she foresaw a new future on the horizon when she waited for the whistle:

“I wanted to help my family. I wanted to earn¹⁰. When I was a child I dreamt of the countryside. I wanted to be a professional that way, to have my farm, my ranch, like in the novels. That was my ideal! My mother sold food, I also thought about having my own restaurant, to manage, to have my own business.¹¹ That all changed later with sport. With sport I never imagined myself running like this¹².”

From childhood dreams of countryside business, she transitioned towards this new professional imagination, oriented to her embodied labor and opportunities beyond her village.

Taking to the winner’s podium at day’s end, Nina smiles when gold is draped around her neck by the president of the Regional Sports Council. The medallion shimmers between dense braids of black hair that flank her shoulders, each weave bouncing from the flesh of anterior deltoid as she hops nimbly back to soft earth after enjoying applause from above. Momentarily, Killa and Chaki will ascend to receive their medals too, each a ticket to sea-level in December. For Nina, it will be the next visit to Lima after countless others, but for her peers it will be the first.

Congratulating each of them before ascending to the dormitory to shower and rest, Nina looks wiser than her age, seasoned and reassuring to her potential dorm mates. And though from afar I cannot hear the words she shares with them in confidence, I ponder whether she tells them something like what she was told years before:

“She was from Kuntur, and I was from Raymi, both of us from Sonqo. So she told me: you have to win. They’re going to give you everything. Everything.¹³”



When the center in Cusco was only a plan in the early 2000s, former administrators in the Sports Institute imagined its relative proximity to rural areas would cushion the emotional disruption of extracting prospective athletes from their “family environments,” something that migration to Lima could not do. They foresaw opportunities for resident athletes recruited from the provinces to travel circuitously through the urban hub for their training, from home to the center and back, as was explained to me by bureaucrats who participated in the foundation of the infrastructure:

“The change for the child or the adolescent isn’t so brusque because if you remove them from their family environment at thirteen, twelve, fourteen years of age towards their same region but simply to another space, other scenery, rapidly they will be able to visit their family every weekend.”¹⁴”

This institutional vision did not materialize, though. Ten years after the center’s founding, resident athletes recruited from deep in the provinces hardly visit their families with every-weekend regularity. Regular travel would be logistically impossible, and the deleterious effects of long-distance commuting on training progress deters coaches from approving of most non-holiday travel altogether, creating an antagonistic relation between athletes and technical team that pivots about the fulcrum of the training body.

Although athletes like Nina live and train full time in the center, they are nevertheless mobile. First, Nina is geographically mobile, for she has moved from her rural village to an urban hub. For athletes like Nina, sport is almost always the first reason they depart from their home villages, the reason for their first visit to Lima, the reason for their first and maybe only

international travel. Yet for coaches and administrators, mobility troubles, because athletes are, second and correlatively, *upwardly* mobile: they move from the rural world of subsistence agriculture to the hustle and bustle of urban political economy, arriving to an expanding field of opportunity at precisely the moment they exit a contracting one:

“In that moment they are in a reality that is hardly beneficial for them. They feel frustrated. Some are coming to fifth grade¹⁵ and they don’t know what to do in this moment, the last year. “What do I do? What am I going to do?” So we arrive¹⁶, and we’ve gone precisely a month before their exit from school.¹⁷”

This institutional hopscotching, from the tail-end of one trajectory to the start point of another, frames their engagement with sport, for *“in that moment a spark goes off in their heads”¹⁸*, Julio explains. Athletics provides them opportunities for social and economic advancement, to *“continue forward” (seguir adelante)* and earn income, but it also articulates with other infrastructures. Recruitment missions to the countryside are conducted most frequently in November, in anticipation of the December cross-country invitational that launches top prospects to the national championship. While this timing creates a runway for prospective athletes to acquire medals and enter the center, it also coincides with the exit point for graduating middle schoolers and high schoolers, who find themselves at the crux of a choice that overwhelms them in precisely these months. Recruitment appears as if from nowhere as a promising exit strategy for those on the brink of a decision about where to go after graduation. *“So, in that moment many kids in fifth grade [think] ‘maybe this is my opportunity’”¹⁹*, Julio says of the school age youth who jump at the chance to hopscotch from rural institutional deadlock to urban mobility in Cusco.

As Nina frames it, before sport, her professional aspirations were tied to agricultural labor and to the work patterns of her mother. But sport “changed everything”, providing a new mode of conceiving of future possibilities. Nina recalls it was her father who suggested that running might open pathways to new horizons, and the possibility of traveling the world enchanted her. *“One time my father told me that athletes run, to Brazil, they travel to other places, and I thought ‘wow,’ and I imagined myself running, ‘how can they run like this?’²⁰”* She asked herself how it might be possible to do what others were already succeeding at before her. From the point of view of the technical director, parents likewise reckon the futures of their children as they exit the infrastructure of the educational system:

“The parents also say: my child is in fifth grade, now what am I going to do with my child? For some parents it’s like ‘I already know what it is I’m going to do. I’m going to ensure that they follow this path, and in some manner I liberate myself, but at the very least I know that my child is doing something, I have a quick solution to my problem.’²¹”

Recruitment is therefore perceived to link two partially intersecting infrastructures at a crucial juncture, a “key moment” for newly minted high school graduates: the infrastructure of the Sports Institute, and the political economy of labor migrations in the urbanizing hubs of the departments.

“Lamentably, what they have there as a life really is no life²²,” Idalberto opines of the circumstances from which his athletes have come. Upon arrival to the training center, residents gain access to a suite of “specialized services” that do indeed provide answers to questions of what parent and child will do to secure a future, including a fully funded housing in the dormitory, daily meals, full-time access to a sports nutritionist, sports psychologist, doctor, and physical therapist, as well as perks that come with residence in a state-sponsored infrastructure, such as Internet access in a designated study space. Athletes are even poised to earn monthly

stipends through the Sports Institute's Athlete Support Program (*Programa de Apoyo Al Deportista*), provided they can muster the competition results to warrant it, which among its various pay scales provides what residents consider impressive income.

9.4.1 DERECHOS DE LOS BECARIOS EN EL CAR

Todo becario interno tiene derecho a:

- Alimentación
- Alojamiento
- Asistencia técnico-metodológica, que incluye evaluación de los planes de entrenamiento, apoyo metodológico y supervisión técnica en coordinación con los entrenadores y equipo Médico.
- Derecho a hacer uso de las infraestructuras e instalaciones deportivas y servicios del CAR en las condiciones establecidas por dicho centro.
- Atención en los servicios especializados en Medicina, Fisioterapia, Nutrición, Psicología y Bienestar Social del CAR, con la finalidad de realizar las evaluaciones fisiológicas y preparación psicológica entre otras.
- La Asistencia Social, incluye tutoría y orientación a los deportistas con el apoyo para los trámites y coordinaciones para sus traslados y/o ingresos a los centros de estudio escolares o superior, actividades recreativas, culturales, etiqueta social y todas aquellas áreas que involucren y que estén dirigidas al bienestar social del deportista.
- Acceso a sala de estudios, Internet, TV – cable, juegos y lavandería.
- Ropa deportiva y Kits deportivos que envíe la IPD.
- Recibir adecuadamente respuesta ante inquietudes del trabajo a realizar.
- Ser tratado con respeto por su entrenador, compañeros, JUT, Biomédicos, y todos aquellos que de alguna manera tienen injerencia en su preparación deportiva.
- Ser informado adecuadamente de la lista y efectos de sustancias doping.
- Postular al Programa de Apoyo al Deportista (PAD) de acuerdo a los resultados técnicos obtenidos.

Figure 5-3: Resident athlete "rights" in the Performance Center

(Source: IPD 2018, p.34)

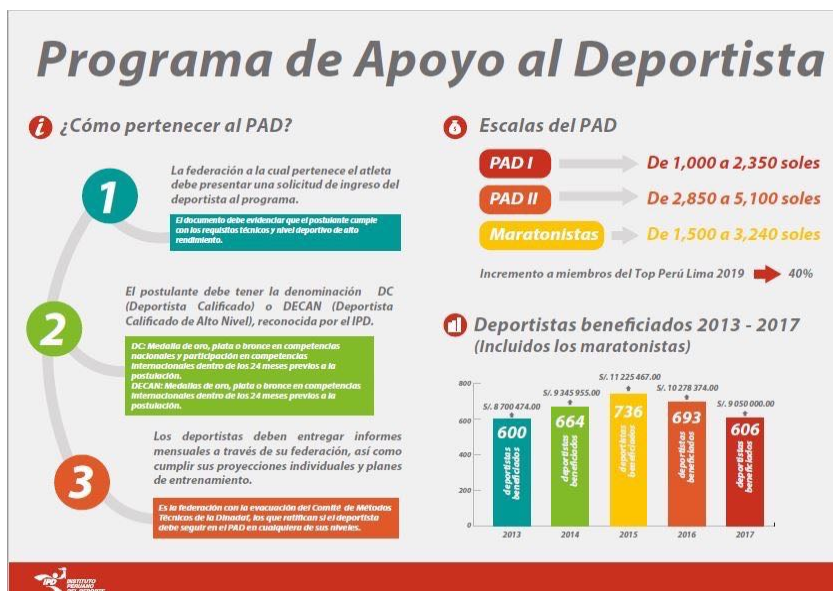


Figure 5-4: Athlete Support Program pay tiers

(Source: IPD 2018)

However, communicating during recruitment that sports opportunities open doors provokes downstream trouble vis-a-vis families invested in the capacity of their children to earn by way of education or migration to urban areas. For its confluence of assets, entrance into the center is attractive to multiple parties competing to leverage the athlete's body, and coaches and administrators therefore grow weary when they sense new recruits are more invested in the resources than their training. Consider for example how Chaki frames his own commitment to training, summoning his family as a motivator for his exertion:

*“Nuqa, bueno, nuqa phawayta munani porque nuqaq, chay **talintuy**, usia quizás antismantapacha disdi abuyiluymantapacha nuqa chay **talintuta** apayta munani, mana nuqa **kidakuyta** munanichu, famillaykunapas **urgulluso** sintikunanpaq.”*

“I, well, I want to run because my, my **talent**, I mean maybe since long ago, I want to carry that **talent** from the time of my grandparents, I don't want **to fall behind**. Sometimes, also so my family members feel **proud**.”

Talent cultivation is here ensconced in a broader discourse of inter-generational lineage, of aiming to push forward and not “fall behind”. When kids leave home at age thirteen, they are, according to coaches, one fewer mouth to feed, and so a lessened burden. Yet when they reach working age, and find themselves in the city, they transform into an asset for the family, able to acquire education and generate income to bring back home. After migrating to Cusco from the countryside, new recruits not only secure housing and stable income, they also find themselves in close proximity to educational centers and opportunities to further their careers. Bouncing from rural areas into the urban hub, many are distracted by University entrance exams in particular, and the question of how and to what extent they will study begins to weight heavy. Months after his entrance to the center, Chaki begins voicing doubts about his remaining there: “*sure they give*

room and board,” he concedes, “but you don’t always live off only that, because in the future when I want to be something better I have to find a job²³.”

Some of the best athletes the training center has ever seen left long before reaching their competitive “peak” (*cima*) to pursue higher education in the national university or to find work in the city. Those who do enter local Universities quickly find themselves in thorny situations, trapped between highly demanding endeavors, each of which vies to monopolize their time. Memories of competing pressures haunt many ex-athletes who chose study over training: “*my parents pressured me not to leave the University, and here they pressured me to give more time to training²⁴,*” recalls Simi. While at first the balancing act holds together, as the student-athlete spends more and more days scurrying to class sweaty and hungry after morning training, pining for a meal during a lecture they struggle to follow, then returning to train again, the risks pile on. “*I got injured more easily, my progress en training was very little, I tried my hardest but I didn’t improve like before,*” she explains. “*Milliseconds and milliseconds ran from my hands. I couldn’t split myself in order to go to classes²⁵.*”

Against these threats to retention, coaches constantly reaffirm the center is a place for results and for medals, where you must “remember, you’re here to train, you’re not on vacation” (*recuerden estan aca para entrenar no estan de paseo*). In response to a bad performance on the track, some coaches even shout contemptuously to their athletes “that they focus on their studies already” (*que se enfoque en sus estudios*), ascribing performative failure to attention spread too thin between multiple activities, as if to force the athletes to choose from among them. Administrators decry those who endeavor to use the training center as a “welfare center” (*centro de beneficios*), as a “trampoline” (*trampolín*) to pursue education and income to the exclusion of

competition success. The director's phrasing could not be more blunt: "*If they have no disposition for technique, then for what²⁶?*"

The catch, as Tomas puts it, is that Cusco was selected as the site for the training center not only because of its autochthonous populations and hypoxic environment, but also because Cusco had "greater access to opportunities than other cities":

"If you analyze the map of Peru, from a geographical point of view there is no other city at high altitude in the southern zone that has the technological development, let alone the access, even less so the possibilities that Cusco had in that moment for the construction of a CAR. If you compare it with other cities close by, for example Huancavelica or Ayacucho, these cities did not have the development that Cusco had from a demographic point of view and less so from an economic point of view. So for that reason a CAR was constructed here, it has more infrastructure, more asphalt tracks, it existed for that moment.²⁷"

The physical and physiological training possibilities of hypoxic exposure are inseparably entangled with historical migration and political economic realities. One medium intersects with another, in the words of the director: "*Cusco united not only the quality of high altitude but also the quality of being a strategic city.*"²⁸ As a consequence, the training center serves as a transition point, one built into the city of Cusco itself, between the performance space-times of the coaches and the institutional access points that interest the athletes; as an infrastructure entangled in a historical and material surround it recapitulates historical labor migrations to the city.

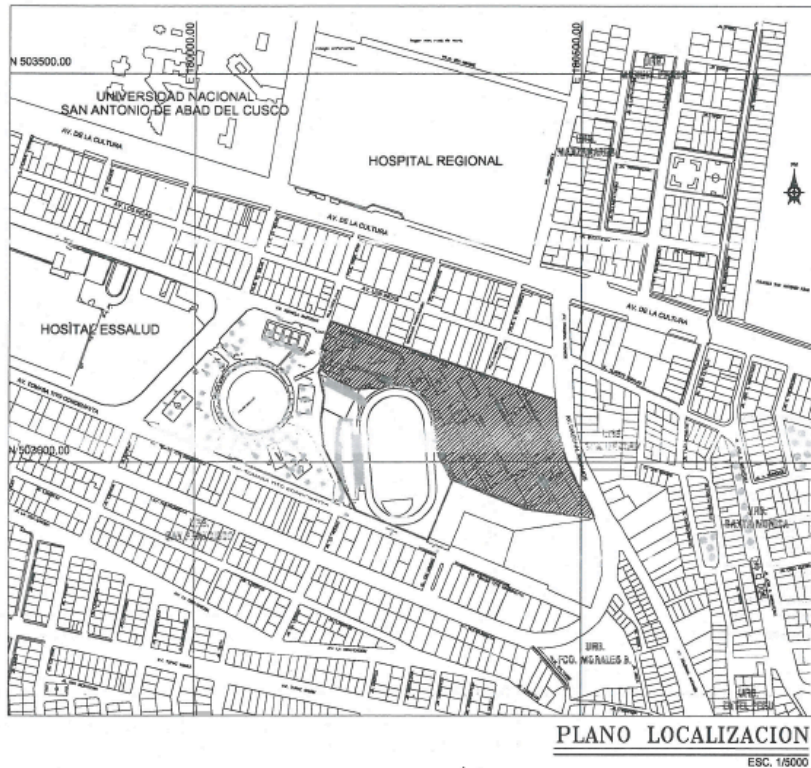


Figure 5-5: Architectural plan for athletic infrastructure in Cusco

(Source: Convenio IPD 2014)

Notice the way *technique* and *results* are juxtaposed with *university* and *welfare center*, how parents are counterpoised to coaches, embodied cultivation and sociopolitical mobility framed as inverse endeavors that siphon energy from one another. Notice the way time invested in one domain means less in the other, that “milliseconds” escape the hands of athletes immersed in their studies. The antagonism is succinctly summarized in the differential between the technical directors scathing critique of recruits who would enter the training center on the false premise that it is a social service institution, and Nina’s story to access Cusco in order to unlock new opportunities for travel and knowledge. On the one hand is a vision of future-facing progress, a constant quest for “results,” for “technique,” for technical refinement to the exclusion of all else, the *winning (ganar)* of which Nina’s bunkmate spoke when she arrived at the center

for the invitational. On the other hand, athletes like Nina express a desire to explore new socio-economic horizons, *to earn (ganar)* for their families. Anka asks of himself how his newfound access might afford him new possibilities of empowering his home, of delivering his family from poverty: “*¿Imaynatataq ruwanchisman chaymanta llusqinanchispaq*” he ponders; “*how would we do in order for us to leave?*”

All find themselves in an arena of possibility between competing, uncrystallized futures. Coaches wrestle with enduring frustrations as new recruits struggle to internalize the values of sporting glory:

There always remains that “my opportunity, but for what?”, “they’re opening a door for me but I don’t know well what there is behind that door.” Many times they acquire the knowledge of what there is behind that door with contact, with competition, and much more when they go outside of Peru representing the country, when they say “now I realize.”²⁹

As both parties vie to congeal the frame of athletic empowerment, the center exacts its design, sculpting residents through a moralizing regimen. At the intersection of these futures, boundaries are erected between the training center and its surround to maintain focus while neutralizing competing institutional pulls, and time is woven into the corporeal through exhaustive habitualization routines that play out across the many spaces of the compound.

5.4 Habit Rearing Inside the Total Institution



Figure 5-6: Early morning scramble to the track from the dormitory wing

“They’re already heading down... Wait for me³⁰!”

Pre-workout apple and granola bar in hand—a meal he ought to have eaten before descending to the track—Phawaq flies from the dining hall through the male dormitory to rendezvous with his teammates in the commons before their passage to the asphalt. Shuffling behind him is Chaki, bleary eyed and struggling to keep pace with peers who have already habituated to the schedules. The routinization of Chaki’s day has been relentless, the early morning ritual still clunky. *“They make us get up earlier, I’m still tired. Six thirty, at that hour I used to get up. Here, at five in the morning I need to be on the track³¹. ”* Incrementally acclimating to new demands, he takes the transition one hurried step at a time: *“little by little, that’s all.”³²*

Racing to the security gate, Phawaq and Chaki pass compartments situated on either side of the hallway, the many offices that line the arcing corridors of the compound. The center is a

microcosm that deconstructs and distributes the human body into its architecture, disentangling the corporeal channels of athletic cultivation and assigning an office to each: for psychology, for physical therapy, for nutrition, for coaching, and for the technical director of the facility and his supporting staff. With only a pair of tightly monitored access points, one might envision the training center like a massive hypoxic chamber, an environment sealed from the world, an infrastructure built *around* thin air. Yet hypoxia was only one reason for the founding of the center. *“Another is...in that moment was to, rear [athletes], you know? To create the centers with the objective that there was- a possibility that the kids had this possibility of being concentrated³³,”* explains Idalberto. Total institutions are, after all, built to bring residents into proximity for their appropriate administration; the center is a purportedly controlled environment where recruits might be *“reared”* (*criar*), or “concentrated” and encouraged to focus wholly on their sporting development.

There must be a “logical evolution” from the training conducted on the track to the performance metrics that bear its fruit in competition, both for coaches to prognosticate competition standings with some degree of accuracy and to provide hard data for the Sports Institute’s continued blessing of an athlete’s residence in the compound. Yet prediction and prognostication are not only the backbone of training on the track; they also scaffold life off the track. The goal, Tomas explains, is to bring athletic development above the threshold of awareness constantly, what the staff in the center call *“concientización”*—*raising awareness*—by drawing attention to habits of technique, comportment, and hygiene while compelling athletes to understand their interrelations: *“every time a new generation of athletes arrives who enter the CAR it’s starting from zero. Beginning to shape them anew, to rear their habits, to tell them what*

track and field is. Because they have the altitudes and the conditions, but they really don't know what it is."³⁴

Though the inculcation of technique and the development of endurance are the pre-eminent objectives of the training process—objectives that capitalize upon the envisioned physical “conditions” of untrained recruits from the “altitudes” of the Andes—they are enmeshed in broader disciplinary practices of “habit rearing” that regulate behavior outside of and between training blocks, off the track and out of the training center entirely. *Controls*, like the ones Phawaq and Nina ran, are, after all, only moments—critical moments but moments nonetheless—that punctuate a long-term schedule of habituation that includes not just patterned calculations of training loads and ensuing recuperations, but also patterned inculcations of everyday routines and movements inside the facility. Insofar as habitualized action is understood to enable and constrain other actions according to some logic, here the logic holds that incremental sports adaptations are interdependent with quotidian behavioral modifications. It is as much in the day-to-day events of the training center *off* the track that athletes are expected to come alive to and embody this logic, “*so that they go inserting themselves inside this new mode of life,*”³⁵ says Daniel.

Thus ensues an encompassing bureaucratization of adolescence wherein daily behaviors are mapped in lockstep with the physical plant, the modular composition of which divides the performances of resident athletes into discrete biomedical and physical categories that can be monitored and administered, all the constituent parts of the training “organism.” Entrance and exit from center are under constant surveillance. Backpacks are checked at the security gate for illicit substances. Color coded urine charts line the bathrooms, indicating (de)hydration ranges with nine colors, from *normal*, to *moderate*, to *severe* for athletes to self-assess. All in the center

have their height and weight checked at regular intervals in the coaches' office to observe fluctuations in body composition. To mediate between training and competition performance, the biomedical staff in the center monitors hemoglobin levels to ensure optimal functioning in the resident athletes, requesting their regular blood work from local clinics for a biometric snapshot of their preparedness. The attending doctor reviews results for red flags indicating anemia or performance compromising conditions like food-borne parasites, modifying their nutritional intake accordingly when warranted.

Notices informing athletes of the urgency to shower after training sessions hang from the door to the shower rooms, though troubles with adherence to bathing protocol frustrate the staff, leading to folk theories, for example that *“many of those who have been here didn't bath themselves, because they thought of the human body that the thermic sensation of the muscle lost force, lost energy, and that is something that comes from there, from their own culture, let's say, and they have come with that type of message.”*³⁶ But athletes explain otherwise, pointing to embodied labor practices of the countryside: for example, the accumulated sweat of work in the *chakras* invites warnings of mixing sweat and water and advice to dry the body before cleansing it. *“That I don't shower with a hot body, so that what has happened to her or to my grandmother does not happen to me”*³⁷, explains Nina of instructions from her mother. Continuing to do so “brings illness with time” (*apamusunkiman enfermedadta tiempowan*), including “bone aches” (*tullu nanay*) and “head aches” (*wasa nanay*). Despite the closed quarters of the center, instructions that bear on hygiene penetrate the facility in phone calls from relatives. *“What is transmitted from before”*³⁸, athletes say: messages from generations past in the countryside continue to inform embodied practices among incoming athletes in the center. *“We bathed ourselves in the river,”* pines Puriq, nostalgic for the open space of his home. *“When it had just*

rained, we said 'let's go,' in the river we bathed. Here, in the shower. There, it was something else."³⁹

Macronutrient charts drawing attention to appropriate protein and carbohydrate intake line the dining hall, eliciting adherence to daily eating protocol and stipulating strict prohibitions on street and junk food⁴⁰. Yet athletes struggle with the sudden change in foodstuffs and portions, often reminiscing of comfort foods from home. Thus, a tumult of issues: athletes eating street food and not eating full portions in the dining hall as a result, trouble with athletes refusing to take their vitamin supplements, the kitchen staff finding uneaten portions and little pills left behind here and there on the dining table after breakfast some days, lunch others. Puriq often yearns for comfort foods from his *cabaña*: *"there we drink other broths. Other foods. It's not like that here: rice, rice, rice. There: chuño, papa, quinoa are eaten there."*⁴¹ Set against the routinized carbohydrate intake of the training center, iconically reproduced in Puriqs' monotone trifecta of rice, rice, and more rice, is the wider diversity of countryside tubers he grew up with, ones unavailable to him in the confines of the facility.

Athletes therefore grow anxious in their new home, in close quarters that provoke trouble for those curious to know "that which is felt living in a city" (*lo que se siente vivir en una ciudad*). *"The first few months I felt comfortable. Then I began to stress myself out because they told me I couldn't leave,"*⁴² says Michi. *"In order to do bad things you need time. And here its study and train. With what time are you going to do bad things? It doesn't even occur to you"*⁴³. Like Puriq, Michi grapples with the strict constraints on her mobility in the center, envisioning her transition between life worlds as a narrowing of possibilities: *"there I always liked to go out. I like to see the world, I like to walk. It all completely changed when I was here. They even came to lock us in with a padlock,"*⁴⁴ she says. The physical infrastructure itself therefore becomes the

target of modifications that aspire to neutralize feelings of enclosure: dorm rooms are periodically reshuffled so the residents encounter novel space. New paints coats old in a thin veneer of novelty, but nevertheless stories abound of athletes escaping from the center in the dead of night by repelling down the building sides with ropes fashioned from warm up suits and recreational clothes tied to their waists, fleeing to explore Cusco's night until return at the crack of dawn⁴⁵.

Success comes to those who have become their own best bureaucrats: those who conscientiously professionalize the everyday, attending to material flows that pivot around their organism, regulating food, rest, and the passage of time in a self-governmental regime. Anka perhaps best exemplifies this ego-centric administration, having subjected his life to fundamental alterations in order to maximize his performance when his promising start at the center landed him on a training squad with senior athletes: *"in order that there were that change that I made, I broke up with my girlfriend first of all, second I focused on cementing a goal, and third, I was disciplined"*⁴⁶. Liberated from extracurricular pursuits like love, Anka, like other successful athletes in the center, curates daily routines that chain together habitual movements into templates that structure each moment of waking life. Physical exertion and replenishment are linked into behavioral processions that trace the geography of the infrastructure:

En el programa yo dormía a las 7 y cuarenta, hasta las 6 al día siguiente. Y dormía de día también después de entrenar. Después de salir de la pista, iba me duchaba una ropa lavaba y me dormía hasta el almuerzo una horita media horita. Después bajaba al almorzar, descansaba un rato y venía a entrenar acá, y después en la tarde cenaba a las seis, y después a las siete me echaba a mi cama, si tenía sueño si no tenía sueño tenía que estar a

In the program I went to bed at seven forty, until six the next day. And I slept during the day as well after training. After leaving the track, I went to shower, and cleaned some clothes, and I slept until lunch, an hour or half an hour. After I came down to eat lunch, I rested a bit, and then came to train. And afterwards in the evening I ate dinner at six. And after at seven I lay down in my bed. If I was tired, if I wasn't tired, I had to be at seven

las siete y cuarenta en la cama. En algún momento se me hizo habito eso, y esa rutina seguí un año, todo el año seguido con esa rutina, así enfocado, porque no era tan fácil sostener el mismo ritmo de los mayores.

forty in bed. In some moment this became a habit, and I followed that routine a year, the entire following year with that routine, focused like that, because it wasn't easy to sustain the same rhythm as the seniors.

These habit routines purport to optimize embodied performance, and they are also, functionally, parts of longer sequences that buttress competition performance. They scale from the mundane to the critical moments of athletic excellence—the eco-chronotopic calibrations of controls and competitions—where the incremental adaptations of habit modification and training crystallize as social facts of sports achievement in official record books. It is the willful pursuit of this habitualized lifestyle that differentiates the successful athlete from their peers, and Anka's self-report foregrounds the dovetailing of athlete and administrative attempts to "raise awareness":

"what I had to do was be more disciplined and more conscious of myself, to care for myself in that sense."⁴⁷

The technical team is positioned to (re)apply knowledge accumulated from managing successive generations to current residents, to modify their habits and socialize them not just to the metrics of endurance races on the track, but also the metrics of training as a daily mode of life. Yet the corporate organization of habit modification shocks many upon arrival, who perceive this rigidity, in which "*everyone follows order, functions, whether it matters if its ok or not*⁴⁸," as a form of social suffocation. In the arena of contested re-habitation, when things inevitably go wrong, the experts of this infrastructure mobilize to discern and address problems.

5.5 (Mis)Behavioral Ascriptions

Even the most promising athletes can burn out or reach insurmountable plateaus. Promising juniors turn to mediocre seniors. Rapidly progressing novices shy away from the highly regimented lifestyle of dedicated training. Injuries mount, stymieing progress. The task for the training staff when it assembles to assess the panoply of behaviors showcased in the center is to pinpoint and address troubles specifically amenable to coaching and biomedical interventions, bringing those who stray from the trajectory of upward progress back into temporal alignment with the training protocol. As an example consider Chiri, a once fast-rising youth who has stalled, now regularly upbraided for her high times and her perceived withdrawal from staff members. In Chiri's own words, her performance has dwindled: *"it's that what I want to be doing isn't coming out of me. Before I ran well, now it doesn't happen, since I injured myself. I don't run well anymore, like before."*⁴⁹

Her self-evaluation is corroborated by her coach, though he provides a diverging account of her progress in a reunion with the rest of the team inside the coaches office, saying little about her self-ascribed injury while instead scaffolding a temporal arc that points to other matters:

*Chiri fue una chica que entró acá en cero. Y en un año tuvo una **progresión** increíble. Dos veinte en ocho cientos en un año. El año pasado corrió dos veinticuatro, y este año ahora creo que dos veinticu- dos veintiséis o dos veintiocho no se como fue. Así que **subió**. Y ahora esta así. Si la vas a mirar **físicamente** pues no hay otra con mas **condiciones físicamente** como Chiri. ¿Pero y el **cerebro**? Creo que el gran problema de salir esta en el **cerebro**.*

Chiri was a girl who entered here, at zero. And in one year had an incredible **progression**. Two twenty in eight hundred in one year. Last year she ran two twenty-four. And this year I believe two twenty fou- two twenty-six or two twenty-eight I don't know which. That is, it **increased**. And now it's like this. If you look at her **physically**, well, there is no one with better **conditions** physically than Chiri. But what about the **brain**? I believe that biggest problem to come is in the **brain**.

Idalberto regards Chiri, a rural recruit with no history of formal training, as the most physically endowed athlete in the training center, “*there is no one with better conditions*” (*no hay otra con más condiciones*). He claims she started “*at zero*” (*en cero*) and saw a rapid and impressive progression to her control times, indicating future success and confirming her rightful entry and continuation in the center. Then she plateaued, and even regressed, as her times began creeping back upwards. “*And now it’s like this*” (*y ahora está así*), he explains, a development arrested despite glimmers of potential indicating upward momentum. Juxtaposed with ascriptions of wilting physical potential comes an ascription of a psychological flaw, which localizes Chiri’s performance regression not in her otherwise impressive physical conditions, but in “*the brain*” (*el cerebro*), that is, her head.

On Idalberto’s heels the gears of the training center go into motion, and the biomedical and technical teams begin to chime in, conversationally sketching a characterological figure who has been underutilizing the recovery components of the training center infrastructure, who is not properly adhering to disciplinary protocol, and who does not “persist” in recuperating her energy. The sports psychologist provides his account of things:

*Porque a nivel del entrenamiento, o sea lo que se observa, y se ha hablado mucho con ella ¿no? Se ha hecho **descarte de trastornos hipocondriacos**, no tiene trastornos hipocondriacos. Sin embargo **tiene un bajo umbral del dolor**. Pero también su actitud, o sea no solo en la parte psicológica, O sea con servicios de psicología, sino su psicología en general, con todos los servicios, is bien raro, porque **no persiste**. Si no hay una motivación de persistencia continuaras el **actitud** de creencia a las cosas.*

Because with respect to her training, I mean what is observed, and she has been spoken with a lot, no? She’s conducted an **evaluation of hypochondriac disorder**, she doesn’t have hypochondriac disorder. Nevertheless she **has a low pain threshold**. But also her attitude, I mean not only in the psychological sense, I mean with psychological services, but also her psychology in general, with all the services, is quite odd. Because she does **not persist**. If there is no persistent motivation you will continue this **attitude** of belief to things

Between Idalberto and Daniel there is a confirmation of physical trouble attributed to a low pain threshold to the exclusion of hypochondriac disorder, a negative evaluation vis-a-vis the physical performance of the athlete.

Notably, this ascribed psychology is taken to undergird *inaction*, which manifests as communicative reticence and continued absence from the spaces of biomedical assessment and treatment, a claim that elicits back-channeled agreement and halting snickers among other staff members frustrated with Chiri's lackadaisical efforts.

1.	Daniel	<i>Porque le dices ¿no?</i> "Because you tell her, no?"
2.		<i>¿Te esta doliendo algo?</i> "Is something hurting?"
3.		<i>¿Has ido donde fisio?</i> "Have you gone to physiology?"
4.		<i>No, no he ido</i> "No, I haven't gone."
5.		<i>Y le dices ¿te has puesto hielo? =</i> "And you tell her, have you been icing?"
6.	Tomas	<i>=No =</i> "No."
7.	Daniel	<i>=No se ha puesto hielo</i> "She hasn't iced."
8.		<i>Este ¿has comunicado que estabas con ese dolor? [No</i> "This, have you communicated that you were with this pain? No."
9.	Tomas	<i>[No no =</i> "No, no."
10.	Daniel	<i>=¿Por que no vienes acá a psicología algunos algunas veces? este</i> "Why don't you come her to psychology sometimes? It's-"
11.		<i>No no no tengo tiempo doctor</i> "No, no, I don't have time doctor."
12.	Marta	<i>[Jaja</i> "Haha!"
13.	Michael	<i>[No tiene tiempo =</i> "She doesn't have time." ((Incredulous sarcasm))
14.	Daniel	<i>=O sea ¿que esta pasando? ¿No?</i> "I mean, what's the deal? Right?"
15.		<i>O sea no hay no hay sinergia entre lo que dice y lo que hace</i>

		"I mean there is no synergy between what she says and what she does."
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It is as the denotational referent of cascading dispositional ascriptions among the staff that Chiri comes to life discursively. Her training organism is enacted conversationally by her coaching team in ventriloquized reported speech, a deictic transposition whereby trainers animate Chiri in virtual talk [16-26]. Thus congeals an interactional text of cross-party alignment in which interlocking modules of expertise attune to an array of developmental trajectories: there is the aforementioned biometric development, the musculo-skeletal and psychological developments of growing adolescents assessed by the biomedical staff with an array of procedures—from psychological evaluations to physical therapeutic interventions. Among them all is a fixation on progress, in the various *controls* and training for each athlete. Chiri, simply put, is not progressing, nor broadcasting any commitment to overcome barriers to her own progress.

As the technical director indicated in his speech, the demands of training are being placed on the “organism” of *youth* athletes in particular, during a critical juncture, a “key moment” in the sum flourishing of all their God-given capacities. Administrators and coaches tease apart these different developmental trajectories with reference to the various “ages” of the athletes, sometimes invoking “biological age” (*edad biologica*), “chronological age” (*edad cronologica*), and “training age” (*edad de entrenamiento*), which according to coaches do not necessarily correspond perfectly among the athletes in the compound. As Julio puts it:

*“Above all in these early ages we also see athletes who possibly have a delayed growth and others who possibly have a premature growth, right? And so it might make us believe that they too are talented, but perhaps later they are not. And something else is that possibly we might cast them aside and later it comes to be that they could be talents. Also the training age, how many years have they been training. It’s not the same, a little **natural** and a more **systematized** training.”⁵⁰*

Though many of the resident athletes had been commuting by foot their entire lives in the countryside before recruitment, according to coaches they had not learned the more technically detailed movements of running events in the process, and thus the “natural” development of their rural upbringing comes with some costs in the absence of “systematized” training: one might misconstrue early childhood excellence as an indication of future developments that never come, or contrarily misperceive adolescent mediocrity as an indication of an empty future.

This recognition of developmental volatility informs Julio’s intervention in contradistinction to his peers, a push for patience with Chiri:

1.	Julio	<i>No es una cosa clara en el caso de Chiri</i> “It’s not a clear thing in the case of Chiri.”
2.		<i>Hay chicos que sabemos que después</i> “There are some who we know, after,”
3.		<i>Hay chicos que han pasado por ese momento acá y ahorita</i> “There are some who have gone through this moment here, and now,”
4.		<i>Están consiguiendo medallas suramericanas</i> “They’re obtaining South American medals.”
5.		<i>Rumi y Huayra han pasado han pasado por allí</i> “Rumi and Huayra have been through that.”
6.	Tomas	<i>Siempre hay bajos momentos=</i> “There are always low moments .”
7.	Julio	<i>=Por el mismo caso que Chiri</i> “In the very case of Chiri.”
8.		<i>Pero si es verdad o sea que hay un problema en la cabeza</i> “But it is true, I mean, there is a problem in the head.”
9.	Daniel	<i>La diferencia es la actitud nomas</i> “The difference is only attitude .”
10.		<i>Que ellas entrenaban mal pero había ganas había actitud</i> “That they were training poorly but there was desire, there was attitude .”
11.	Idalberto	<i>Pero Chiri entrenó muy bien el primer año que estuvo acá.</i> “But Chiri trained very well the first year she was here.”

Ultimately, after deliberating the temporal trajectory of Chiri and the possibility of performance progression—and further regression—the team settles on a grace period within which she may

signal her commitment to protocol, while also demanding “a medical revision of all aspects”⁵¹ to verify there are no hidden, blood-based issues. The team walks a developmental tight rope, navigating the “low moments” of the athletes while endeavoring to potentiate each “key moment” as various maturations come to their intersections in a sporting peak, a “*synergistic*” confluence. Here, the habit raising that is the focus of the technical teams and of the athletes ends where a certain interventionist sociality begins. Habit is, for the team, a theory of inter-action, it is a knowledge instrumentalized and attuned to dyadic relations between coaches and athletes on the track, and between athletes themselves off of it. Wielding expertise aggregated over generations of incoming athletic cohorts, the technical team discerns routines of negative reinforcement that might compromise competition performance and the securing of medals, and thrusts itself into those routines where athletes are perceived to fail, a communicative scaffolding for the acquisition of technical and habitual movement.

For the technical director, this tightly regimented knowledge production is cause for pride, as out of all the training centers, Cusco is at the vanguard of athletic cultivation. “*Recently they have considered us first place among all the CEARs at the national level*⁵²,” he beams, freshly returned to Cusco from an administrative reunion at the national headquarters in Lima with the directors of each of the other centers. Assessing each of the constituent parts of the center, Tomas has only the best things to say:

*“in the case of Cusco it’s been the only one that has presented scheduled biomedical services, and this model has been applied in all the other CEARs, they congratulate us for that theme. It is the only one that has specialized nutrition, that let’s say has given its first steps in these months, partially no other has proposed something like this, they’re all the same. The only one that has tried to develop that is Cusco. In the theme of psychology we are the only ones who work with software, with fiches and everything. Huancayo doesn’t have software, it doesn’t even utilize psychiatric testing. Far, we’re far ahead of them right now.”*⁵³

But why this jubilation? Why this ambition to lead the pack of centers, to elicit the favorable evaluation of the national headquarters? Why the constant celebrations of soon-to-be arriving technology, like stopwatches and new vests?

Recall that the technical team is *also* pressured to performed: they too are in the crunch of a bureaucratized sports culture that demands results. Recall also that continued residence in the training center depends upon the regular achievement of national or international results. Competition results, as well as findings regarding all the performance categories represented among the staff are synthesized in regular reports (*fichas*) by each team, and so provide global overviews of everyone's progress, including training metrics to justify continued residence or warrant expulsion. These reports are sent to the Sports Institute headquarters at intervals, where they are assessed by national methodologists who green light the continued residence of performing athletes and sanction the proposed termination of others who are faltering competitively. Recall finally that athletes and their coaches are therefore under considerable pressure to secure outstanding places in competitions.

In sum, coaches and administrators are dreadfully concerned with what they call "stalled progress" (*progreso estancado*), and the stakes are high. According to the technical director, "*in resistance events normally an athlete has to be in their best moment around 25 years of age,*"⁵⁴ yet with only a few exceptions, all the resident athletes in the center are in their teens. Given the wide interval of training that separates their initiation into systematic athletics from the hypothesized peak of their careers, maintaining focus amid competing possibilities for future advancement is of the utmost importance, hence the granular attention to habitual routines, the appropriate use of the training center to the exclusion of competing attentional pulls like

education and vocation. Here, multiple competitive temporalities intersect: the progress of the athletes, and the progress of the training center staff, who like those they are tasked with cultivating, must legitimate their performance with measurable progress for their employers. This tug of war, over the productive “conditions” of the Indigenous body, is the ground upon which ascriptions of a more pointed kind emerge, ascriptions that reverberate both in the center and on the track.

5.6 Culturalist Ideologizations of Embodied Residues

“Kayman hamuni allinta nuqa naypaq, allinta progresanaypaq. Huq allin ñanta puriyta munaspa,” Chaki tells me, rubbing an ice brick against his knees on the track after sprints in the early evening; *“I came here in order to better myself, in order to progress well. Wanting to walk the good path.”* Months after his formal entrance to Cusco, and weeks after his first national-level competition in Lima, Chaki is concerned. Like many before him, the training intensity has caused immediate discomfort and nagging injuries. Yet Chaki confides that he has not sought medical attention: *“I haven’t been able to tell the doctor anything, anything. I only told my coach that this hurts me, that I have a pain like this. Well, in order not to bother him that is, in order to not bother my coach I stayed quiet, but I was in pain, and that’s how I went to Lima⁵⁵.”*

To the extent that sports prospecting continues for new ends old practices of harnessing embodied potential, sports bureaucrats are cognizant of how their work articulates with Andean history. The technical director readily explains how this history bears directly on the athletic potential of endurance running prospects from the countryside:

“These Indigenous communities are subjected to mining exploitation, to encomienda, and so on, and these kids, who have a great potential precisely for living in places so inaccessible at such altitude, come, but with these traits of temerity, that they aren’t the best, that they can’t open themselves to the world because they’re afraid, they often feel inferior, devalued.”⁵⁶

In his estimation, though the long segregation of Quechua populations in the Andes has generated a talent pool for endurance running, the cardiovascular advantage these rural youth have comes at a price. The price is that in order to successfully unlock the potential of Quechua children and transform them into professional athletes through modifications to their musculature, coordination, daily habits and diet, coaches and staff must combat what they describe as stymieing rural Andean behaviors. If one takes the staff at their word, Quechua youth are disposed to stubborn fatalism, defeatism, self-effacement, and an inferiority complex which hinders athletic performance.

For administrators in the center, the purported inferiority complex manifests in ways that compromise the communicative availability of the athletes in particular, who upon encountering difficulty in training “no longer speak to you directly” (*ya no te habla directamente*), who “speak from below or behind” (*habla por abajo, por detrás*) when they need something, who “don’t want to be attended to” (*no quiere ser atendido*) in the doctor’s office or on the track. First, the ecological transition from the thin air of high altitude to the humid air of the coast spurs an environmental shock for new athletes descending for the first time into the thick, humid climate. Next, the brusque social transition from the countryside to the close quarters of the center cause adaptive shocks for recruits confronting the communication environment of the technical team: *“there, in a village, a community where there is one house and then maybe another that’s a kilometer away, and there exists practically no social relation and even less a conviviality, and then to come here and cohabit with among twenty or more others?⁵⁷”* Narrowing in on spatial adaptation, the director characterizes rural living as distant, in his view devoid of sociality.

From the point of view of administrators, the arrival to the concentrated living space of the center from such an arrangement therefore generates the host of problems between themselves and their athletes. For coaches, *“it’s an almost total upturning of their habits from where they come to be here.”*⁵⁸ They perceive a fundamental difficulty to habituate to the daily necessities of training life: *“including even in order to use the silverware in the dining hall, it’s difficult for them, how to sit at the table in order to eat their food, practically they don’t know how”*⁵⁹ says Julio. *“Sleeping in their bed, with their mattress, with their sheet, with their blanket. They don’t know it.”*⁶⁰ In the center the technical team thus imagines itself in a composite position, a lamination of roles that cushion this social shock: the team is *“a father, an educator, a pedagogue,”* one who *teaches*, instructs, and cares, because the athletes simply *“do not know.”*

For the technical staff who saw the early phases of the training center adaptive problems have continued to manifest themselves in successive generations of athletes from the start, as each came to grapple with habituating to a new environment:

*“The first beginnings were the same way that things are managed here, that they were going to come from various places, generally the bastions of Pacha and Sonqo and all that, right? And good in that sense of the opportunity, so it was let’s go to the facts, and the same manifests, that with the passage of time the uprooting, it isn’t easy to be able to adapt to cohabitation.”*⁶¹

In the words of Daniel, athletes from talent *“bastions”* have *“very good endowments, very good aerobic capacity, but they bring some things from the cosmovision.”*⁶² Separating the *“endowments”* of physical and aerobic capacity from the cultural baggage of the countryside, Daniel ascribes behavioral hindrances to rural origins, succinctly summarized in a worldview commonly referred to in the Andes as the cosmovision. With this in mind, athletic training is doubly programmatic: it is a reflective process of habit modification that aspires to equip

Quechua trainees with the disciplinary and corporeal awareness to succeed as professional athletes, while also shaping anew habits imbued with the embodied residues of rural lifestyles. Predictability and prognostication in the training process are hardly the solely physical processes of calibrating training metrics; rather, they intersect with behavioral problems ascribed to culturalized causes.

Athletes, however, tell a different story. Not much more than a decade into existence, former athletes who entered the center during its initial phase articulate an alternative model of adaptation, recalling instead a “union between companions” (*union entre compañeros*) derived in large part from a shared sociocultural history. Upon its founding, the center housed people “*more or less of the same economic resources and the same distant zones of Cusco*⁶³” remembers Inti. Many of the original athletes came from the same areas and had partaken of no formal training; this was, recall, before the intense bureaucratization of talent recruitment that ensued as the first generation of athletes began to accrue medals. Many shared customs, traveling to Lima for competitions with cheese and *tostado* in their bags, still wearing the *chompas de lana* and *mantas* characteristic of their childhoods. “*We were new,*” remembers Riti, “*and no one knew each other, we all went at the same hour to do things. As we were all from the countryside, we didn’t have other dreams, it was the best to be here for the great majority*⁶⁴.” At the start was “everything in harmony and tranquility” (*todo en harmonia y tranquilidad*), an initial equilibrium before a results-driven enterprise, when athletes and coaches coexisted inside of the center with minimal antagonism. Things changed, however, as the cohort began to fracture. Some left, some stayed, new athletes entered. Within a few years, the relative union of the first generation gave way to social fragmentation and regrouping: sometimes among age cohorts, sometimes among elder and

junior generations, and because in “*each period the kids changed,*” explains Riti, from harmony came a change in mentality: “*each to their own corner*⁶⁵.”

Insofar as their rural to urban migration entails an adaptive process of habit modification, the Quechua athletes in the training center are not unlike similar migrant populations in sports training contexts. However, the salient explanations of problems with performance in the training center defer to ascriptions of characterological flaws that *stifle* physical potential, flaws closely associated with circulating discourses of rurality in the Peruvian countryside. The accumulated, inter-generational knowledge of the training staff proceeds in dynamic tension with the inherited inter-generational knowledge of Quechua populations in the Andes. What results are perpendicular thematizations of behavior. Whereas the eco-chronotopic calibration of training entails poetic counterpoising of ‘here-there’ deictic constructions to describe performance enhancement across ecologies, in discussions of habit modification these poetic juxtapositions situate lifeworlds only partially amenable to one another. Where coaches see stubborn embodied residues in the behaviors of the athletes, athletes see social fragmentation through age cohorts and a shift in their pedagogical relations, from union to compartmentalized corporatism.

Notice the ironic equivalence: where coaches lament the bureaucratization of talent, athletes lament it too as it recapitulates in the training center’s regulations. While the coaches accuse national bureaucrats of “not knowing the reality” of Cusco’s geography and talent distribution, athletes bemoan constant surveillance, a sensation of bureaucrats always over-the-shoulder, constantly demanding adherence to code. Thematization of behavioral trouble thus oscillates from physical ascription to culturalist ascription within and between communication environments. Disentangling the bio-physical from psycho-social is a daily task for the training center staff, and “*cosmovision*” comes to serve as a meta-pragmatic master narrative that informs

construals of all sorts, in training sessions and outside of them. Clear patterns emerge as the staff differentially ascribes accounts of problematic behavior to distinct realities: in recruitment and descriptions of athleticism, rural implies physical potential, while in training, rural is connected to disciplinary problems largely dealing with will and character.

5.7 Conclusion: Scaffolding National Success from the Individual

Like roads criss-crossing valley sides in their descent to Cusco's urban hub, competing temporalities transect the training process, provoking ceaseless tugs of war over the physical development of the athletes, their educational trajectories, and the family obligations they feel as they come of age. It is a collision of "temporal anxieties" (Besnier 2011; see also Jeffrey 2010) on the edges of mobility pathways, a race against disparate times: to achieve sporting excellence before physical changes and degradation compromise peak performance on the one hand, and before social expectations and responsibilities accumulate to the detriment of training on the other. Sitting at the intersection of historical and political trajectories, the training center houses "competing claims to modernity" (Lemon 2013): administrators boast their forward footing in a race to the top among the training centers at the national level, while athletes contemplate social and vocational pathways that fracture off the infrastructural node. Each party eyes opportunities while sculpting the body in pursuit of competition victory.

While infrastructures occupy space and facilitate passage through it, so too are they temporal: they mold and modify the flesh and bone of their objects in time, tailoring them to specific temporal horizons while excluding them from others. Ultimately, whose modernity is pursued? The training center is a material infrastructure designed to materialize sports success, and its endeavors manifest in the embodied habits of resident athletes, who (struggle to) learn to

inhabit their bodies in unfamiliar and vexing ways. Focusing on the different kinds of dispositional ascriptions sports programmers make reveals how the corporeal is imbued with competing temporalities. Coaches and athletes pin embodied behavior to trajectories that can be monitored, and this stabilization of behavioral construal is essential in athletic training because, as coaches reiterate, athletic behavior must be predictable. If the training center focuses on “organismal richness” exposed to high-altitude air, it is not as a stronghold to maintain purity, but rather as a dynamo to disentangle athletic ‘conditions’ from embodied residues of rural origins. While the center provides ecological access to the thin air of high-altitude training—an ecology that potentiates the athletic development of resident athletes—it also potentiates a recorporealization of those athletes by scaffolding a membrane across which to monitor entrances and exits: let oxygen into blood, let pills into bodies, let water into mouths, let trampoline artists out. All roads to the future monitor “the organism” in its “key moment.”

Expertise in the training center mediates between ecologies and chronotopes: it makes the athlete’s body fit for sport and fit for *convivencia* in the closed quarters of the total institution. Concentrated in a relatively controlled environment, athletes are situated within a dense matrix for behavioral ascriptions, a web of behavioral patterns all of which are imagined to act upon each other, sometimes in causal ways, and all of which are monitored for adherence. Yet where administrators see behavioral holdovers and attempt to eradicate them, athletes see partially overlapping modalities of being. Anka’s diagrammatic icon of Andean political economy— ‘*city shoe, country sandal*’—spotlights a twin embodiment distributed across lifeworlds and poised to pivot between them. For Nina, *win* and *earn*—both encompassed under the semantic umbrella of the same Spanish very ‘*ganar*’—go hand in hand. Here, a “border gnosis”: “the multiplication of epistemic energies in diverse local histories” (Mignolo 2012 p.39) organizes local histories at the

interstices of global capitalism and colonial modernity, where modernist ambitions for sporting progress collide with Indigenous strategies to maximize socioeconomic mobility, intersecting poverty escape strategies that jostle with trained carnal aphasia. This is a neo-colonial body sculpting that transcends the nation, an intersection of Indigenous epistemology and globally circulating knowledge making practices in sports culture.

How then to ensure regular progress, to maximize fruitful training, to seize the “key moment” and ensure that the talent does not “escape”, does not flea, does not bounce from the trampoline into other, less taxing institutions like the neighborhood schools and academies? The degree to which this habit raising depends upon reflexivity and ensuing overt ascriptions of socially recognizable types of behavior will become clearer once we attend closely to the rigors of training, where a semiosis of behavior triangulated between participation frameworks leads to recursion and diffusion of culturalist ascriptions. At the intersection of these crisscrossing attempts at access—the gift of high-altitude upbringing versus the opportunities of the city—is a racializing ideologization of communicative reciprocity that organizes movement on the track. To better understand it, we exit the security gate and descend from the compound to where foot meets asphalt.

¹ “A estas altitudes, tienes que trabajar.”

² *Es un momento de la vida que hay que aprovechar, que es el momento clave donde podemos, en nuestro organismo. Les pone una riqueza que les fortalece para poder enfrentar esta carrera. Nos facilita, por las virtudes que tienen ustedes para poder hacer deporte—en este caso el atletismo, el medio fondo, la resistencia. Creo que este es el momento mas importante para poder explotar y llevar a lo mas alto esas condiciones que dios les dio, para poder llevarlos a lo mas alto, no solo en el deporte, sino en todos los aspectos de la vida.*

³ “Cuando llegue, fue como que en un sueño.”

⁴ “El deporte te lleva a sitios que no conoces, nunca has pensado llegar.”

⁵ “Siempre estas aqui.”

⁶ Interestingly, ‘dressage’ in its historical usage referred to the acquisition of sequenced movement patterns for horses.

⁷ See also Seligman 2012, Zeppel 2006, and Zorn 2004 on parallel transborder linkages in the urban marketplace and the tourism sector.

⁸ This assumption that emerges in social anthropological examinations of “techniques of the body” (Mauss 1979; see also Firth 1970) where the functionality of the habit is its routinization below a threshold of awareness. The position is often echoed by Pierre Bourdieu, for whom habits are “transmitted without passing through language and consciousness” (1991: 51; Agha 2007: 229; Hanks 2005; see Downey 2010 for a discussion of Bourdieu’s theory regarding sport, and see Bourdieu 1988 p.160 for his own discussion of sport as perhaps the prime cite to challenge this very idea), often in institutional contexts of tense power relations like educational centers, such that subjects find themselves unconsciously predisposed to behave in accordance with social structures of domination rather than resist them (Althusser 2014; Gramsci 1971).

⁹ “¿Quién sabe si esto les puede abrir las puertas de muchas cosas?”

¹⁰ “Quería ayudar a mi familia. Quería ganar.”

¹¹ “Cuando era niña soñaba con el campo. Quería ser profesional así, quiero tener mi granja, mi rancho, como las novelas. ¡Así, esa era mi ideal! Mi mamá vendía comida, también pensaba tener mi restaurante, administrar, tener mi negocio.”

¹² “Después ya cambió con el deporte. Con el deporte nunca me imaginaba yo correr así.”

¹³ “Tienes que ganarles a todos. Tienes que ganar. Te van a dar de todo, así me decía pues. Como era de Kuntur, yo de Raymi, los dos de Sonqo, pues me decía: tienes que ganar. Tienes que ganar. Te van a dar de todo. De todo.”

¹⁴ “Entonces el cambio para el niño o el adolescente no es tan brusco porque si lo sacas de su seno familiar a los trece, doce, catorce años hacia su misma región pero simplemente a otro espacio otro escenario rápidamente va a poder visitar a su familia todos los fines de semana.”

¹⁵ I.e., their final year in school.

¹⁶ I.e., arrive with the recruitment caravan.

¹⁷ “En ese momento ellos están con una realidad que no es nada beneficiosa, se sienten frustrados, algunos están llegando a quinto y no saben que hacer en este momento, el último año. ¿Que hago? ¿Que voy a hacer? Entonces llegamos y justamente hemos ido a un mes de su salida del colegio.”

¹⁸ “En ese momento a algunos se les prende la chispita.”

¹⁹ “Entonces en ese momento a muchos chicos de quinto, ‘quizás este es mi oportunidad.’”

²⁰ “Después ya cambió con el deporte. Con el deporte nunca me imaginaba yo correr así. Pero una fecha mi papa me dijo que corren atletas, a Brazil, otros lugares viajan, y yo wow, y yo me imaginaba así corriendo, ¿como correrán así?”

²¹ “El papa también dice: mi hijo esta en quinto año, ahora que voy a hacer con mi hijo? Para algunos papas es como que “ya se que es lo que voy a hacer. Voy a tratar de que camine de esta forma, de alguna manera yo me libero, pero ya se por lo menos mi hijo ya esta haciendo algo, ya tengo solución a mi problema de pronto.”

²² “Lamentablemente, lo que llevan allá como vida realmente no es vida.”

²³ “Claro que te dan alimento y hospedaje, pero no siempre vives de eso nomás pues, porque con el futuro cuando yo quiero estar algo mejor tengo que buscar un labor.”

²⁴ “Mis papas me presionaban para no dejar la U, y acá me presionaban para darle más tiempo al entreno.”

²⁵ “Me lesionaba más fácil, mi progreso en el entreno era muy poco, yo me forzaba pero no mejoraba como antes. Milésimas y milésimas se me iban de las manos. No podía partirme para ir a clases.”

²⁶ “Si no tiene la actitud de técnica...¿Para que?”

²⁷ “Si tu analizas el mapa de Peru, desde el punto de vista geográfico no hay otra ciudad a nivel de la zona sur que tenga el desarrollo tecnológico, ni mucho menos el acceso, ni mucho menos las posibilidades que tenía Cusco en ese momento para la construcción de un CAR. Si tu lo comparas con otras ciudades por ejemplo más cercanas, Huancavelica o Ayacucho, estas ciudades no tenían el desarrollo que tiene Cusco desde el punto de vista demográfico y mucho menos del punto de vista económico. Entonces por eso es que se hizo allá un CAR, tiene más infraestructura, más estadios, existía para ese entonces.”

²⁸ “Cusco reunía no solamente la cualidad de altura sino también la cualidad de que sea una ciudad estratégica.”

²⁹ “Siempre queda esa ‘mi oportunidad, pero de que’, me están abriendo una puerta pero no se bien que hay detrás de esa puerta.’ El conocimiento de lo que hay detrás de esa puerta lo adquieren muchas veces ya con el roce, con la competencia mucho más cuando ya salen afuera del Peru representado al país, cuando dicen ‘ahora me he dado cuenta.’”

³⁰ “Ya están bajando. ¡Espérenme!”

³¹ “En las mañanas por ejemplo nos hacen levantar mas temprano. Tengo sueño todavía, seis y media a esa hora solía levantarme. Acá, cinco de la mañana tengo que estar en la pista.”

³² “Pero poco a poco ya.”

³³ “Claro uno de los motivos es eso. Y por otro es... en aquél momento fuera por, criar, ¿no? Crear los centros con el objetivo de que hubiese alguna- la posibilidad de que los chicos tuvieran esta posibilidad de estar concentrados.”

³⁴ “Cada vez que llega una nueva generación de atletas que entran al CAR es empezar de cero. A empezar de nuevo a formarlos, a criarles sus hábitos, a decirles que es el atletismo. Porque tienen las altitudes y las condiciones pero no saben realmente lo que es.”

³⁵ “Para que se vayan insertando dentro de este nuevo modo de vida”

³⁶ “Muchos de los que han estado acá, no se bañaban, porque pensaban de que el cuerpo humano, o sea la sensación térmica del músculo, perdía fuerza perdía energía y eso es algo que viene desde allá, desde su propia cultura digamos, y han venido con ese tipo de mensajes.”

³⁷ “Que con cuerpo caliente no me duche, para que no me pase lo que le haya pasado a ella o a mi abuela.”

³⁸ “Lo que se transmite de antes.”

³⁹ “Nos hemos bañado en el rio, cuando recién llueve decíamos vamos, en el rio nos bañábamos. Acá en ducha así. Allá era otro.”

⁴⁰ These foods are typically allowed on special occasions, like holidays or birthdays. Generally, athletes are not to consume anything outside of the center, instead carrying prepared meals with them to university classes to ensure proper nutrition.

⁴¹ “Allá otros calditos se toman. Comidas. No es así acá: arroz arroz arroz. Allá: chuño, papa, quinoa se comían allá.”

⁴² “Los primeros meses me sentía cómoda. Luego empezó a estresarme porque me decían que no podía salir.”

⁴³ “Para hacer cosas necesitas tiempo. Y acá es estudiar y entrenar, ¿con que tiempo vas a hacer cosas malas? Ni se te viene a la mente.”

⁴⁴ “Allá siempre me gustaba salir. Me gusta ver al mundo, me gusta caminar. Cambio totalmente cuando ya estaba aquí. Hasta llegaron a encerrarnos con candado en la puerta.”

⁴⁵ Perhaps the most fantastical of these stories concern Wallpa, who not only escaped from the center itself but even returned to the countryside. When athletes in the training center who have been around long enough to remember Wallpa talk about him their eyes glaze over. Julio believed that he had unearthed a future world champion when he discovered Wallpa years ago, tall with an “elegant” stride, lean but muscular, every track-and field-coach’s dream. Wallpa ran a one-kilometer trial in *Wasi*¹ like everyone else, with the best mark ever recorded for an untrained athlete by a scout from Cusco.

His home was hours walk from the nearest road. Wallpa’s parents, monolingual Quechua speakers, received Julio on his first visit, though Wallpa was nowhere to be found. So, Julio had to wait another day for their son to return, because he wouldn’t leave without his new athlete and the signed paperwork to formalize his entry into the training center, Wallpa at the time still a minor. When at last Wallpa did show, Julio persuaded him to come to Cusco, though not without the help of Wallpa’s enthusiastic physical education instructor, whom Julio had enlisted to fortify his recruitment pitch. Julio’s mission was successful, and Wallpa agreed to enter. His arrival stirred the pot; he was quickly outrunning many of the best athletes, and with next to no formal training. Even then, much of the recruitment was done in November in anticipation of the Cusco cross country invitational, and with hardly any time to prepare Wallpa ran, securing a spot to compete at the national championship in Lima.

Sometime between his victory at the invitational and the ensuing competition in Lima, Wallpa, they say, fashioned a rope made of clothing and lowered himself through the narrow window of his dormitory room onto the grounds before scaling the perimeter fence and escaping into the night. Julio and Daniel, after discovering that a star athlete had fled with no word of his exit, jumped into a truck and made their way back, deep into the countryside, to the highlands of *Pacha* and to the village of *Wasi*, before once again trekking over frozen ground and rocky hills to Wallpa’s home. Julio claims that Wallpa was actually sitting by his doorstep watching them walk up the hill, grinning, and that he welcomed them warmly, almost as if he had no conception of the extreme duress he had caused them. And after hours of lambasting and grilling and chewing out, Julio once again had to convince Wallpa to return to the center to train with what little time remained so he could compete in the championship in Lima. Wallpa agreed and, some say, proclaimed he would win anyway, without any preparation whatsoever.

And soon-enough the competition came, and Wallpa, in Lima for the first time in his life, launched himself from the start line, quickly establishing himself as the front runner of the pack. And Julio and crew looked on in awe, certain at that point that Wallpa would arrive to a world championship with proper training and time. But with two laps to go in his five-kilometer debut, Wallpa, well ahead of his competitors and seemingly guaranteed to win, faltered and ultimately collapsed. On Wallpa's first trip to sea level, the viscous air of coastal Lima overcame him. After the shocking end to Wallpa's win streak, Julio was unable to convince him to recommit, to learn to adapt to the ecological changes between high and low altitude ecologies. Wallpa retired from the center officially, thereafter falling off the radar. For a long time, Julio believed Wallpa had been working as a bicycle repairman, though in 2018 Wallpa's whereabouts became known once more: he had started working in one of the copper mines in *Sonqo*, an ironic return to deep below the surface.

¹ On our recruitment mission to *Wasi* the physical education instructors confirm for a curious Julio that Chaki is in fact the nephew of the former prodigy.

⁴⁶ *"Para que hubiese pasado ese cambio que yo hice, termine con mi novia primeramente, dos enfocarme en planificar una meta, y tres ser disciplinado."*

⁴⁷ *"Lo que tenía que hacer es ser mas disciplinado mas consciente de mi mismo cuidarme bastante de esa parte."*

⁴⁸ *"Todo el mundo cumple ordenes, funciones, sin importarse si esta bien o no."*

⁴⁹ *"Es que no me esta saliendo lo que quiero hacer. Antes corría bien, ahora no me sale, desde que me lesione. Ya no corro bien, como antes,"*

⁵⁰ *"Sobre todo en estas primeras edades también vemos chicos que a lo mejor tienen un crecimiento tardillo y otros a lo mejor tienen un crecimiento prematuro, ¿no? Y a lo mejor nos hacen creer que también son talentosos, pero a lo mejor luego no lo son. Y otro es que a lo mejor los podemos desechar luego resulta que si podrían ser talentos. También la edad de entrenamiento, cuantos años llevan entrenando. No es lo mismo, un poquito **natural** que un entrenamiento ya mas **sistematizado**."*

⁵¹ *"Una revisión medica de todos de todos los aspectos."*

⁵² *"Recién nos han considerado en primer puesto entre todos los CEARs a nivel nacional."*

⁵³ *"En el caso de Cusco ha sido el único que ha presentado los horarios de servicios biomedicos, y ese modelo ha sido aplicada en todos los CEARs, por eso nos felicitan por ese tema. Es el único que tiene una alimentación especializada, que digamos ha dado sus primeros pasos en estos meses, prácticamente ninguno mas ha propuesto algo así, todos iguales, el único que ha tratado de desarrollar eso es Cusco. En el tema de psicología, somos los únicos que trabajamos con software, con fichas y todo. Huancayo no tiene software, no utiliza ni los test psiquiátricos. Lejos, estamos lejos de ellos ahora mismo."*

⁵⁴ *"En las pruebas de resistencia pues normalmente un chico tiene que estar en su mejor momento a partir de los 25 años."*

⁵⁵ *"Cuando llegue me lesione. Aunque la vez pasada antes de la competencia de la copa también me lesione. Me estaba doliendo esta parte y faltando una semana para la competencia de la copa. No he podido decirle nada al doctor, nada, solamente le dije al hermano que me duele este, que tengo un dolor así. Bueno para no quedar mal así, para no hacer quedar mal a mi entrenador me quede callado, pero si me dolía, y así fui a Lima."*

⁵⁶ *"Estas comunidades Indígenas son sometidas a una explotación minera, encomienda y todo ello, y estos chicos, que tienen un gran potencial realmente por vivir en lugares tan intrincados con tanta altura, vengan pero con todavía esos rasgos de timidez de que no son los mejores, de que no pueden abrirse al mundo porque tienen miedo, se sienten muchas veces inferiores, desvalorados."*

⁵⁷ *"Allí en un pueblito, una comunidad donde hay una casa y quizás la otra esta a un kilómetro y prácticamente no existe una relación social ni una convivencia mucho menos, entonces ¿llegar acá a convivir entre veinte, veinte tanto chicos?"*

⁵⁸ *"Es un vuelto casi total a sus hábitos de donde ellos vienen a estar acá,"*

⁵⁹ *"Incluso hasta para utilizar los cubiertos en el comedor, les cuesta, como sentarse en la mesa para tomar sus alimentos prácticamente no lo saben,"*

⁶⁰ *"De dormir en su cama, con su colchón con su sabana, con su frazada. No conocen."*

⁶¹ *"El inicio primogénito fue de igual manera como se maneja acá, que iban a venir de varios lugares, generalmente bastiones Pacha Sonqo y todo eso no, y bien en ese sentido de la oportunidad, era nos vamos a los hechos y se manifiesta en lo mismo, que pasado un tiempo el desarraigo, no es fácil el poder adaptar a la convivencia."*

⁶² *“Muy buenos dotes, muy buena capacidad aerobica, pero traen algunas cosas de la cosmovisión”*

⁶³ *“Mas o menos de los mismos recursos económicos y las mismas zonas alejadas de Cusco.”*

⁶⁴ *“Éramos nuevos, y nadie se conocía, todos íbamos a la misma hora a hacer algo. Como éramos del campo no teníamos otros sueños, era lo máximo estar aquí para la gran mayoría.”*

⁶⁵ *“Cada periodo se cambiaban los chicos, cada uno por su lugar.”*

Chapter 6 : Cultivating Talent

6.1 Introductory Vignette: Receptivity to Instruction in a Conditioning Circuit



Figure 6-1: Athletes churn dirt in the long jump box for metabolic conditioning circuits

From above they look like diamonds ensconced in coarse grains: sweat and dirt entangled and congealing in the long-jump pit. When sun breaks on the eastern horizon, light shines through sweat drops that fall from the faces of Phawaq, Tika, and Rumi. The salty essence glimmers on its journey from flesh to ground, refracting sunlight into crystal shards until meeting and mingling with the cold below, forming dark chunks that stand out from the dry earth. All pant in the throes of a metabolic conditioning circuit.

To begin, the trio shoveled the pit to embellish the desired training effect: churned dirt means hands and feet sink, encountering greater resistance, thereby working harder to move. Having set the stage for their own collective suffering, they cycle through a sequence of high-intensity exercises, inching closer to muscular failure with each set of pushups. Each wears a vest weighted with fifteen kilograms of metal bricks. The straps dig into their shoulders. Sweat-damp dirt coats hands which compact grains of sand, turning soft mounds of loose particulates into cemented sheets spattered with the dark dots of tumbling spittle.

“Let’s go, Phawaq!”

Idalberto is illuminated by the sunrise. His torso heaves, his arms flail. From strained vocal cords emanate vibrating columns of air that ricochet off the high perimeter walls. Unrelenting they come, staccato like bullets, bouncing from the brick back onto the strained bodies of the athletes in the dirt. A plane passes, delivering a payload of tourists to Cusco who won’t ever make it to the track at 6am to feel the punch of Idalberto’s shouting.

“Let’s go, you have to be working the entire time!”

His voice pierces, his gaze a laser scanning limbs for faults. Where a problem is detected, a cue is launched. His training maxim bears upon them: “training is the reflection of competition,” he routinely proclaims, “if it is not achieved in training it can not be achieved in competition¹.”

“Working!”

Tika is in the cross hairs. She is frozen, hovering in a static top position, arms and legs fully extended, motionless save for gasping that shakes her abdomen. Her pushups have stalled, and she has caught the attention of her coach for it.

“I can’t stop in the competition!”

Idalberto is frantic, transposing himself onto Tika, who trembles suspended on limbs locked and obstinate. He doubles over, pushing words from diaphragm, tip toeing closer to his disobedient pupil, invoking a future in which she is failing. The nylon cord hanging from his stopwatch twirls. Tika wiggles her hips in discomfort but does not descend.

“I have to continue working Tika!”

The sanction is firm, but Tika continues to peer onto the wet dirt below her. She does not look up at Idalberto, even when her name tumbles from his lips, a proper noun that culls public attention. No longer one link in the chain of athletes in the dirt, she has been interpolated, transformed into an isolated individual with a name and a biography, whose near future depends on an embodied response not forthcoming. Her motionlessness is incendiary. She does not heed the call.

“Flexion in those arms!”

Idalberto demands that she break at the elbow, that she come unstuck, that muscles tense into flexion to deliver her face closer to the bed of congealed droplets accumulating beneath. Hardened droplets like little spectators look upwards, witnessing Tika’s strained face, across which now streak sweat *and* tears, a maze of intersecting rivulets that gather in the folds of forehead and cheeks before falling as precipitation.

“Work!”

Bending at her elbows at last, she descends a quarter of the way into full flexion before extending to the stability of her top position again.

“Work!”

She shakes, trapped between the condemnation of her coach and the burning in her arms. Fed up with Tika, Idalberto trains his gaze anew on Phawaq, not locked in full extension like

Tika, but collapsed in the bottom position, torso flush with wet earth. The rest of the technical team stands nearby wincing, unable to shrug off the discomfort of viewing the exertion.

“Look at Phawaq.”

Idalberto implores his addressee to look to where his gaze remains fixed. Does he address us? We spectators stand unsure if we have been invited to respond, whether Idalberto’s addressee is real or virtual, distal or proximal.

“Phawaq!”

The name explodes from Idalberto’s mouth, another athlete interpolated. I remember Phawaq’s words from our last interview: *“I want to earn the trust of my coach,”* he said. Turning his head upwards to meet Idalberto’s gaze, Phawaq punches the ground, as if in exasperation for being unable to maintain form, as if to communicate that he fails not for lack of trying, nor for lack of wanting.

“Let’s go!”

At last, Idalberto turns away, announcing that time has expired for the exercise. He cues the trio to be ready for the next one in the circuit. Phawaq, Tika, and Rumi collect themselves, each sweating in the dirt exhausted, each covered in coarse grains, shimmering potential caked in crud. To whose voice will these athletes come alive, if not to their coach’s?

6.2 Embodiment as a Problem of Communicative Availability

With his catalogue of response cries, Erving Goffman highlighted the communicative readiness of any “social situation” in which people find themselves in visual and aural proximity: “if need for immediate action is required of us, we will be ready—if not mobilized, then mobilizable. A sort of communication tonus is implied. If addressed by anyone in the situation,

we should not have far to go to respond, if not to reply” (Goffman 1978 p.791). Keen as he was to vocalizations like “strain grunts” and “threat startles,” Goffman’s penchant for portraying the charge of interaction comes across in his word choice: *tonus*, for the physiologist, refers to constant tension in muscle tissue. “Communication *tonus*” thus brings to mind the image of an interaction muscle, one ready to bear the brunt of whatever the job is at hand, as if interactants were fibers stretching taut to accomplish the eccentric and concentric tasks of co-existing. Complementing one another in conversational flexion and extension, everyday people backchannel understanding, foreground communicative receptivity, and anticipate transition relevant places in the flow of talk within which to launch turns with microsecond precision. Though perhaps ungifted like professional athletes, we are still finely attuned on the turf of mundane conversation.

Where athletes pursue embodied excellence in rituals that swell like muscles, coaches “mobilize response” (Stivers & Rossano 2010) with communicative “grappling hooks” (Zuckerman 2016) that drag trainees into the vocal stream. Their questions seek answers, their cues demand action, their first pair parts require (modified) movements as second pair parts, and these cross-modal “adjacency pairs” (Sacks et al 1974) imbue training and competition with sequence and motion. So, if not to “choreographies of attention” unpaid or interrupted (Goodwin and Tulbert 2011), to what are failed attempts to establish communicative contact attributed? In the performance center, coaches deploy piercing cues designed to systematically induce embodied response, and Quechua athletes strive to communicate attention to and integration of the messages cast on them. When Phawaq beats the ground in frustration, does he neutralize the accusation that he *chooses* not to push through pain? Does Tika disobey Idalberto with her refusal to descend into the bottom position of a pushup, or do her muscles disobey her, despite

her desire to move in accordance with the demands placed upon them? Are each athlete's "self-repairs" (Schegloff et al 1977) of movement constrained by impaired coordination or diminished muscular strength due to fatigue? Both Tika and Phawaq signal a willingness to respond to their coach, clearly each is anxious about *disobeying*, concerned with showcasing sensitivity to his communicative input even if they cannot deliver the corporeal output he summons.

In the midst of language ideologies stipulating that cues "stay above" (*quedar arriba*) movement, the stakes of embodied response on the track in Cusco are the limits of language and the body: the capacity for a coach's cries to amend the corporeal "gifts" of his athletes. Asking what more we might glean of communicative sensitivity and its relation to embodied action, in this chapter I theorize what I call *unreceptibility*²: a semiotic ideology that thematizes perceived failures to attend to language with modified movement as indexes of the inaccessibility of Indigenous embodied potentials. This ideology emerges in the space between attributions of vocal preference among athletes on the one hand, and ascriptions of somatic obstinacy among coaches on the other. Trainees vie to secure the vocal attention of their trainers, treating it as a communicative commodity that indexes talent they themselves are uncertain of having. Meanwhile, coaches port a language ideology of cueing that stipulates a relation between word and action, and where listener response (Xudon 2009) is not signaled appropriately they resign, presuming potential is condemned to wilt in athletes who cannot, or do not, incorporate instruction.

Scholarly engagements with racialized embodiment in sport have pointed to (post)colonial contexts in which administrators and coaches harness the "raw" talent (Guinness 2018 p. 321; see also Hokowhitu 2004) or "tame" the athletic "savagery" (Adams 2001; see also Brownell 2008) of disciplinarily "unruly" Indigenous populations "naturally" disposed for sport³

(Besnier 2012). While enamored with the “gift” of a peripatetic upbringing, coaches in Cusco regularly attribute to their budding athletes an Andean “*cosmovision*” that predisposes them to pernicious problems, sometimes with responding to talk specifically. Attempts to establish phatic contact with them are perceived either to penetrate their purported Indigenous worldview or fail to access and activate the gifts encased within it. Tracking how coaches typify the communicative (un)availability, or “recipency” (Sacks et al 1974), of their Quechua athletes as a second-order index (Silverstein 2003) of the cultivability of their purported physical endowments, this chapter examines the manners and means by which *unreceptibility* coheres across frustrating “communication gaps” (Lemon 2013) when responsiveness to language is an explicit expectation.

Language on the sports field is typically acknowledged to affect action in two ways: either athletes block out the world in the throes of competition, immersed in a focus so impenetrable as to transcend reflective attention itself, or they succumb to opposing players and boisterous spectators from whom emanate cries designed to deter action; the boos, jeers, heckles, and trash-talk that echo across basketball courts and football stadiums (see Powis & Carter 2018 for an anthropological review of sporting sounds). Either athletes “flow,” “lock in,” and “become wholly present,” (Wallace 2007), or they “choke,” “freeze,” and “fall apart.” For Zuckerman, verbal distraction often comes “between” conversational pair parts: the response mobilized by a jeer is an answer to a question, or a retort to an insult, and the communicative disposition to queue a vocal response interrupts embodied action, a movement circuit shorted by under-riding “mutual-monitoring possibilities” (Goffman 1964; see also Goodwin 1980). “Phatic violence” preys upon an urge to respond, as if the body’s movement were overridden by the interactional imperative to communicatively engage a co-present other, even if to the detriment of the action.

The solution is to preserve one's "semiotic autonomy," to endure the heckle and suppress the urge to respond, a level-headedness itself thematized as a second-order index, "keeping one's cool."

This sort of *cultivated* insensitivity to language commonly crops up within training contexts that involve asymmetrical pedagogical relations, as McIntosh (2020) illuminates for us in her account of the "verbal blitzing" found in American military boot camps. Drilling in the barracks is, for McIntosh, a "semiotic callousing" designed to cultivate imperviousness to violent and aggressive speech, a preparation for the embodied trials of armed combat transposed into deafening verbal assaults. For Macintosh, this "regime of linguistic insensitivity" "involves numbing *by way of* words, but also numbing the interlocutor *to* words" (p.78). The idea reverberates in Lemon's (2004) study of nascent actors in an elite theater academy in Moscow, where unforgiving teachers engage in public verbal criticism geared toward "painfully breaking the ego" of their green disciples. They accomplish this, on the one hand, by "repeatedly attacking symptoms of 'egotism' – any sign of 'indifference'" on the part of acting students that suggest an unwillingness to open themselves to coaching. At the same time, they "inure them to future, inevitable buffets from bad reviews and angry directors" (234), preparing them for verbal assault on the front lines of cultural criticism. These accounts explicate communicative tactics that purport to deaden, numb, and break the ego, to thicken skin in preparation for extreme (communicative) environments, like the battlefield and the critic's column.

Like regulated exposure to hypoxia as a performance enhancement technology (see chapter three), one might think of McIntosh's semiotic callousing and Lemon's trial-by-fire camps as regulated exposures to linguistic assault. However, on the track in Cusco language is perceived to *empower*: athletes are *sensitized* to language input, and their blocking out of

language is precisely what is to be avoided. Lemon's discussion of habit reformation among aspiring actors in Moscow approximates the notion, where instructors aim "to break down residual habits of indifference, and thereby to produce artists who could stir co-feeling in audiences" (2004, p.328). Confronted with students presumably inwardly withdrawn, instructors labor "to break habitual 'complexes', or communicative behaviors (gestures, tones, non-verbal footings and framings, etc.) that 'closed' a person to others. The old habitus was assaulted through bodily exercises that built partnership and collectivity." Sherouse (2016) similarly explores sensitization to language in a careful examination of athletic cultivation among Georgian weightlifters. "Training cues," he explains, are vocal signs that "direct athletes' attention to technical matters of form." Elucidating the inverse alignment of raw strength and untamed masculinity on the one hand, gracefully coordinated technique and refined femininity on the other, Sherouse explains that "to prompt greater effort, certain training cues encourage athletes to be '*gizhi*' (crazy), that is, to lose a degree of emotional control. This loss of control gives them access to a positively valued masculine trait, the reckless 'nature' available to men, which the athlete must tap into" (104). The vocal instruction of coaches is perceived to empower athletes to *gain access* to potential they otherwise could not reach, propelling them towards better marks.

Whereas Sherouse quotes the language philosopher John Searle to liken cues to 'directives': "attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (1976: 11), this chapter reallocates attention to cues not taken up, asking what "semiotic ideology" (Keane 2018) guides construals of their failure, and how delineating its contours might contribute to our understanding of how social actors conceive of and enact cultivable embodied capacities. Both in the throes of training and off the track, *unreceptibility* takes many forms, from gaze aversion and withheld

second pair parts to “clenched face” and uninitiated greetings. Construed as barriers to contact, these signs elicit urgent “embodied stylings” (Goodwin & Alim 2011) *e.g.*, flailing limbs and crescendos in the volume of cuing from coaches, as if the frequency and intensity of their vocalizations could pierce this communicative husk, then disentangle and coax embodied gifts from it. Yet where phatic experts strive to establish contact and pull potential from its shell, failed attempts to do so leave racializing ideologizations of the relation between language and body in their wake.

Below, I examine how embodied response behavior in the training compound is lumped into three “figures of personhood” (Agha 2007) which fall on a cline of racialized communicative availability, thereby inviting attention to *unreceptibility* as a new site for what some have called the “co naturalization of race and language” (Rosa & Flores 2017; see also Rosa 2016 regarding ideologies of “languagelessness”). My first example involves coaches’ attributions of unamenability to a cohort of athletes from a particular rural region, who are deemed categorically unable to activate despite the vocal input of their trainers. The second involves the (mis)behavior of a celebrated runner who is perceived to willfully withhold her physical potential by refusing the language of her coaches. The third involves an athlete’s perceived refusal to follow the cues of her coach and her ensuing, ultimately futile attempts to persuade him of the severity of a self-reported injury. In each case of “reception roles” (Sidnell 2009 p.141) unfulfilled, athletes provide their own meta-discursive ideologizations of embodied response, pointing to disparate vocal preference as detrimental to their cultivation, sometimes even inverting ascriptions of cosmovision and reflecting them *back* onto their coaches.

In Cusco, coaches labor to scaffold a new sensitivity to language while modeling apathy to pain in the face of fatigue. In the process, the meaning their athletes’ bodies make splays in a

tug-of-war, between the purportedly uncontrollable breakdown of form from exhaustion on the one hand, and an unforgivable unwillingness to try harder on the other. Caught in limbo between signaling a desire to train through cardiovascular and muscular pain, and broadcasting what might be construed as an unbending cultural obstinacy in the hunt for a moment's rest, athletes exercise what control they can to allay accusations of indolence while foregrounding their commitment to improve. Taken together, the vignettes below illuminate the way ethnometapragmatic conceptions of language's relation to the body propagate interlocked, "raciosemiotic" (Smalls 2020) ideologies of communicative and somatic obstinacy, foregrounding "the ways a racialized sign, in its co-articulation with other signs, simultaneously racializes other signs while reifying, or restructuring, its own racialized significance" (p.237).

6.3 Types of Somatic (Un)Availability



Figure 6-2: Athlete awaits feedback near finish line

Stillness before the whistle trill. A pair staggered at the end of the straightaway, tense and awaiting the tones. Waiting like they did during recruitment before, then barefoot and green, now cleated and experienced, in this moment existing only for the start tone. Knees bend lightly, heads tilt downwards while vision fixes upwards, potential energy coiled and queued. Both are extensions of a voice forthcoming, each a willing instrument. The training block will consist of ten sprinting repetitions, eighty meters for Chiri and one hundred for Wayna.

Sitting above the lookout tower at the other end of the track is the training staff. From the moment Julio's whistle begins to scream, all hands on the structure seek vulnerable ears. Palms smooch against exposed lobes, blocking out the piercing screech. Two notes signal Chiri to start first, another two just after signal Wayna to chase. One after the other, the gears of each athlete's body shift into motion: cleats grip asphalt, calves and quadriceps extend to overcome inertia. The pair begins their race down the straightaway towards the tower, under the watchful eyes of the staff suspended overhead.

Unsatisfied with her speed, Julio pelts Chiri with an angry reprimand only an instant after she takes off:

"You're going to take off like that?!"

Wayna accelerates behind, trying to overtake her. As Chiri crosses the finish line, more harsh feedback:

"Doesn't count."

Her time is too high, the repetition invalid. More reprobation as Wayna nears the finish line.

"I believe this one isn't going to count either,"

Click. Over nine seconds; too slow. Recovering their breath, hands on their hips, heads hung low, Wayna and Chiri pass the lookout tower on their journey back to the start line. Each gasps,

each signals effort. Neither is met with gentleness from Julio, who confronts their display with a blunt evaluation:

“Doesn’t count for Wayna or for Chiri. Let’s see.”

He looks down at his notebook to relay the times to them. Stretching beside him during her warmups, Rumi piggybacks on his rebuke, grinning at Wayna as she offers her own technical feedback.

“You see? It doesn’t count.”

Laughter echoes across the tower, and Wayna cracks a smile, setting aside the theater of fatigue for a moment.

“Nine eighty- ay.”

Beginning to relay Wayna’s time, Julio cuts himself off with laughter. Balanced against the rebar that divides the innermost lanes, Wayna seizes on the moment, twisting the levity in his favor.

“That was a warmup.”

Wayna grins. More laughter. Julio relents.

“Ah, well, a warm-up then.”

There is laughter all around, from the coaches and trainers in attendance on the lookout tower to the huffing athletes returning to the far side of the straightaway. Yet as Wayna and Chiri prepare for their next repetition minutes later, Julio prefaces the whistle with a quick dressing down: *“Be attentive! For fooling around just now the repetition didn’t count!”*⁴ Grins are put aside as the pair tenses again.

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On the track in Cusco, coaches are attention sentinels who saturate the auditory channel with demands for compliance. They straddle jocular and disciplinarian affects, oscillating between comfort and contempt with a “whipping cadence” (Lemon 2004) that keeps athletes from falling into complacency. Exchanges which hinge on the athlete’s attention run the gamut from fun to intimidating, and though the flow of talk between coach and athlete during training is largely unidirectional, athletes will engage in other kinds of chatter. By-standing athletes—like Rumi above—sometimes jab conversationally at their peers with “cross-play” (Goffman 1981; see also Goodwin 1996), voicing coaches’ jocular disapproval, jesting as they take stances in public acts of negative evaluation. When Wayna responds to Julio’s assertion that his repetition does not count towards the set of ten by reframing his exertion as only “a warmup” he elicits Julio’s temporary re-alignment (“a warmup then”), playfully unburdening himself of an underwhelming display by reframing it as simply the beginning of what will eventually be a fully compliant series. Of course, Julio pulls the rug from under Wayna moments later, flipping from playful to stern, re-ascribing the lackluster sprint to the unfocused attention of foolery, thereby re-situating his trainee in the hot seat for scrutiny in the remaining repetitions.

Many of the athletes in the performance center report pleasure with this vocal sparring, a communicative regime one might describe as something akin to ‘tough love.’ In lower stakes moments, the routine evokes smiles. Many find the goading humorous, and laughter abounds on the track, for example when coaches demand that those drilling hurdles “seek the ground” (*buscar la pista*) rather than “float in the air like ballerinas” (*quedar en el aire como una bailarina*). Athletes call the verbal fencing “cool” (*chévere*) and “fun” (*divertido*). Conversations during training sessions are liberally peppered with kin-terms and diminutives e.g. ‘little son’

(*hijito*), 'little daughter' (*hijita*), 'father' (*papá*), which imbues the interactions with filial expectations. "For me coach Rene is like my second father," says Rumi; "we work like a family<sup>5</sup>."

For administrators, this paternalistic relation facilitates better results. They aspire for athletes to trust themselves unto their leaders, for them to "couple well with their coaches" (*engancharse bien con su entrenador*) and "immerse themselves" (*meterse*) in their training. Indeed, to be called "immersed" (*metido*) is high praise for an athlete, a celebration of their efforts to incorporate coaching. Yet despite the cultivation of an empowering pedagogy, the fun of training can quickly slip into discomfort and further still into resentment when things go awry. Coaches routinely explode into angry fits when they perceive their athletes are "distracted" (*distraido*). They ask rhetorically if they are speaking in foreign languages. They demand athletes remove their headphones, "clean their ears" (*limpiar sus oidos*), and stop "watching the clouds" (*mirar las nubes*). They riff that they must be "speaking for the hell of it" (*hablando por gusto*) or "conversing with themselves" (*conversando conmigo mismo*), and for having no listeners they threaten to abandon their posts on the lookout tower or, worse yet, send the athletes back to the dormitories.

Within such a routine, distraction operates as a meta-pragmatic construal of attention allocation that invites sanction and ensuing repairs, not necessarily in the vocal stream but in the movements and paces of limbs. Listening is, therefore, of the utmost importance, for listening must be externalized in discernible ways by the athletes less they be construed as distracted and unreachable. This externalized listening can be accomplished in several ways. Consider, for example, how Phawaq falls prey to goading while completing a series of mountain climbers during a conditioning circuit. When Huayra begins to goad from the sidelines as Idalberto directs

his gaze downwards to his stopwatch, Phawaq responds brusquely, nipping in the bud her taunts from afar, communicating an astute attention to talk from those nearby with a textured response.



Figure 6-3: Phawaq (center) immersed in conditioning circuit

|    |           |                                                                                       |                                                                        |
|----|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Idalberto | <i>Mete los pies adelante Phawaq</i><br>“Stick your feet forward Phawaq.”             |                                                                        |
| 2. |           | <i>Adelante</i><br>“Forward.”                                                         |                                                                        |
| 3. |           | <i>Allí</i><br>“There.”                                                               |                                                                        |
| 4. |           | <i>Baja la cadera extiende atrás</i><br>“Drop your hips, extend your legs backwards.” | Idalberto re-directs gaze to stop watch.                               |
| 5. | Huayra    | <i>Ay Phawaq Phawaq</i><br>“Ay Phawaq Phawaq.”                                        | Huayra addresses Phawaq from off camera. Phawaq shifts gaze to Huayra. |



Figure 6-4: Phawaq re-directs gaze and suspends movement, vocally responds to co-present athletes.

|     |           |                                                                                                          |                                                              |
|-----|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.  | Huayra    | <i>Piensa esta tu enamorada alli esta abajo=</i><br>“Imagine your girlfriend there, there she is below.” | Phawaq interrupts his repetitions and re-orientes to Huayra. |
| 7.  | Phawaq    | <i>=¿Puedes callarte?=<br/>“Can you shut up?”</i>                                                        | Phawaq latched response to Huayra.                           |
| 8.  | Idalberto | <i>=Vamos vamos<br/>“Let’s go, let’s go!”</i>                                                            | Idalberto squashes cross-play.                               |
| 9.  | Mayu      | <i>Callarte<br/>“Shut up.”<br/>((Laughter))</i>                                                          | Snickering off camera with Huayra, imitating Phawaq.         |
| 10. | Huayra    | <i>Cállate<br/>“Shut up.”<br/>((Laughter))</i>                                                           | Snickering off camera with Mayu, imitating Phawaq.           |



*Figure 6-5: Idalberto re-orientes to address group. Phawaq resumes exercise, by-standers cease cross-play.*

Phawaq rejects the playfulness of his peer, condemning this horizontal crosstalk among training equals under the disciplinarian gaze of their coach. His rebuke reaffirms his coach's authority—only Idalberto can chide like that—but of course, Phawaq's sly suspension of movement and altered orientation provide breathing room, quite literally, for a moment's rest. His dismissal of his peer serves thus as an improvised break from the action, one of which Tika partakes as she herself re-directs her gaze to Phawaq, a chain reaction of gaze changes that balance about a delicate choreography of attention.

Where misallocations of attention are left uncorrected further ideologizing ensues. Take Wayna as an example, who jested with his coach about his slow pace as simply "warming up." In confidence, Wayna admits that newly arrived recruits in the training center have dashed his spirits. These younger athletes, newly acquiring coordination and technical expertise, receive their own daily programming specific to their novice needs. As an athlete with some time in the center, Wayna is lately told to complete portions of his daily work alone. After first securing the



confidence of his coach through diligent adherence to his training regimen, he has since begun to leave portions of it incomplete without vocal fencing to corral him:

*“A laziness enters you. I was training, and younger athletes than me have arrived. Before, yes I did it, even a bit more. If I had ten kilometers to do I did ten kilometers or a little bit more, eleven. My coach liked that. And my coach trusted so much in that. So when I was left alone, I trained and my coach instructed me: “you have to do ten kilometers. Did you do them?” “Yes, I did.” Nevertheless, I already didn’t do ten, but rather eight, seven. But I told him yes, ten.”<sup>6</sup>”*

Flummoxed by a communicative distancing from his coach, former conversational components of Wayna’s daily workloads have become objects of his own self-reporting, and in his view the quality of his training has begun to dwindle consequently: *“my sports performance suffers, its not the same anymore. In some moment you disappoint yourself. At that point comes regression, you don’t do what you should anymore.”<sup>7</sup>”*

Whatever “doing what one should” might be, it must involve response to coaching instruction, and response, though vocal at times, is largely communicated through modifications to form: an adjusted limb here, a pace increased or decreased there. Even the plain maintenance of rhythm can be construed as a proper response to a training cue launched like a mortar from the lookout tower to the furthest curves of the outermost lanes. However, unchanging pace can equally be taken as a shortcoming. Despite Wayna’s playful phrasing about simply “warming up,” Julio discerns the same pattern of lackluster effort in his pupil that his pupil discerns in himself— a dwindling work rate and a palpable lack of motivation—though his construal is entirely unlike Wayna’s: *“This kid ascends, and he ascends at the same pace as he descends. It’s incredible. On flat ground, the same. You give him track, you give him cross-country terrain. Everything goes the same. It’s curious.”<sup>8</sup>* Tapping his own heart and chest, Julio suggests the

issue is built into Wayna’s corporeal rhythms: “*The problem is here: “this is my rhythm. And it doesn’t matter to me. I go ascending, I’m fresh, or fatigued, I go descending, and I go the same. And I go on flat. And I go the same. And I’m on the coast. And I go the same.”*”<sup>9</sup>” Julio’s assessment musters attention to Wayna’s unchanging pace, no matter the presumed difficulty or environment, be it ascending or descending, flat track or cross country, fresh or fatigued, even on the coast, where the drop in elevation ought to boost performance. His ascription of these behaviors to causes, however, diverges markedly from Wayna’s own reports of discouragement.

In the absence of construable signs of listening, pernicious problems with exciting the attention of resident athletes are commonly ascribed to provincial origins. Dismayed by Wayna’s “curious” problem, Julio sketches a theory of village-specific embodied habits when convening to discuss him with other coaches and administrators, all of whom take it upon themselves to ascertain the origins of his movement—embodied and geographic—by thematizing the relation between cueing and pace.

|    |        |                                                                                                                     |                                   |
|----|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Julio  | <i>En el caso de Wayna parece que</i><br>“In the case of Wayna it seems to me that,”                                |                                   |
| 2. |        | <i>Los cuatro de Willka tienen el mismo problema</i><br>“The four from Willka have the same problem,”<br>(Laughter) | Invocation of rural geography.    |
| 3. |        | <i>Pukara que se fue [Chiri</i><br>“Pukara, who left, Chiri,”                                                       | List of athletes from the region. |
| 4. | Daniel | <i>[Oye pero estas diciendo</i><br>“Listen but what you’re saying-”                                                 |                                   |
| 5. | Julio  | <i>Wayna y Qoyllur=</i><br>“Wayna, and Qoyllur.”                                                                    |                                   |
| 6. | Daniel | <i>=Oye Julio estas [diciendo</i><br>“Listen Julio what you’re saying,”                                             |                                   |
| 7. | Julio  | <i>[Creo que son [los cuatro...</i><br>“I believe they’re the four...”                                              |                                   |
| 8. | Daniel | <i>eh?=<br/>[Estas diciendo algo que es importante</i><br>“You’re saying something that is important,               | Uptake of ascription.             |



|     |           |                                                                                                                                                             |                              |
|-----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|     |           | eh?”                                                                                                                                                        |                              |
| 9.  | Julio     | = <i>No no, si [es que-</i><br>“No no, yes it’s that-”                                                                                                      |                              |
| 10. | Daniel    | <i>[Que es la zona es- las relaciones=</i><br>“That it’s the zone it’s- the relations,”                                                                     | Elaboration of ascription.   |
| 11. | Julio     | = <i>Si eso viene- eso es así</i><br>“Yes, that comes- that’s how it is.”                                                                                   |                              |
| 12. | Daniel    | <i>O sea=</i><br>“I mean,”                                                                                                                                  |                              |
| 13. | Julio     | = <i>Eso es así=</i><br>“That’s how it is.”                                                                                                                 |                              |
| 14. | Daniel    | = <i>O sea Wayna tu- hoy día Julio le decía allí en el gimnasio</i><br>“I mean Wayna, you- today Julio was telling him over in the gym,”                    |                              |
| 15. |           | <i>Estábamos allí todos y de rato en rato todos sus compañeros</i><br>“We were there all of us and from time to time all his colleagues,”                   |                              |
| 16. |           | <i>Todos estábamos allí le decíamos</i><br>“All of us were there we were telling him,”                                                                      |                              |
| 17. |           | <i>Wayna! Le decían Wayna!</i><br>“Wayna! They were telling him Wayna!”                                                                                     |                              |
| 18. |           | <i>Y de rato estaba allí o sea haciendo los abdominales o sea se queda=</i><br>“And by and by he was there, I mean, doing crunches, I mean, he continued.”  |                              |
| 19. | Idalberto | = <i>Pero Chiri es igual=</i><br>“But Chiri is the same!”                                                                                                   |                              |
| 20. | Julio     | = <i>Si por eso digo los cuatro de Willka son iguales los cuatro</i><br>“Yes, that’s why I’m saying that the four from Willka are the same.”                |                              |
| 21. | Yarla     | <i>[Chiri es de Willka?</i><br>“Chiri is from Willka?”                                                                                                      |                              |
| 22. | Daniel    | <i>[Hay un tema de su atención que se dispersa=</i><br>“There’s a component of their attention, that is disperses.”                                         |                              |
| 23. | Yarla     | = <i>Chiri también es de Willka?</i><br>“Chiri is also from Willka.”                                                                                        | Affirmative nods from others |
| 24. | Daniel    | <i>Se dispersa y no es que están a un nivel inferior de inteligencia</i><br>“It disperses, and it’s not that they’re at an inferior level of intelligence,” |                              |
| 25. |           | <i>Solo se dispersa la atención selectiva y la concentración</i><br>“Just that it disperses, the selective attention and concentration.”                    |                              |

For Julio, Wayna’s problem is not solely his own—not simply a “laziness that has entered,” as Wayna contends—but rather shared among “the four from Willka” [2], a small area in one of Cusco’s provinces. Some of the athletes hailing from the region have entered and already left the

training center, others remain in it, yet all are, in this respect and according to Julio, “the same.” Positive alignments ricochet through the conversation, as others confirm the importance of the “relations” emanating from the geographic “zone,” which determine issues bearing directly on the communicative availability of the athletes in question. They are, according to the staff, burdened with “selective attention and concentration that disperses” (*se dispersa la atención selectiva*), [22-25] they “freeze” (*se queda*) [18] during intense exercise, ignorant of loud vocal input from bystanders, coaches and peer athletes alike. Careful not to ascribe the issues to “an inferior level of intelligence,” [24] the staff nonetheless sketches an unflattering image of the seemingly unreceptive athletes.

Crucially, coaches and administrators posit that these embodied habits are unamenable to coaching language, that the relevant athletes “do not activate” (*no se activan*), no matter the degree of cueing or shouting, do not “change their rhythm” (*cambiar el ritmo*), whether in the mountains or on the coast. The technical staff continues to claim that athletes from the village of Willka are condemned to a woefully underdeveloped “proprioceptive level” (*nivel propioceptivo*) and “an inability to measure their bodies in the bio-energetic sense” (*no sabe realmente valorar su cuerpo en el sentido de la bioenergetica*). In other words, they are impervious to what neuro-anthropologist Robert Downey calls “para-phenomenological” interventions, haptic and linguistic scaffolds which “bring into awareness what is inchoate or unconscious,” which “help to make the athlete’s body itself an object of heightened perception” (Downey 2008, p.3). Insofar as those interventions fall on deaf ears, coaches ascribe to athletes like Wayna an *unreceptibility* to the training protocol of long-distance running, an inability to develop over the long-term.

The withdrawal of para-phenomenological interventions leaves doubt in its wake. Much like Phawaq, Wayna expresses a concern with his capacity to maintain the confidence of his coach, reflected in his assessment of their changing conversational and communicative dynamics: “*he doesn’t talk to me now like before. Before it was more fun, he laughed, now he doesn’t, he’s more serious with me.*”<sup>10</sup> Hunched against the guardrails on the inner lanes of the track, Wayna would appear to be questioning his own potential, the very potential he has been recruited from the countryside to realize. Like Chiri before him—herself from the same region as noted by the staff during their deliberations—Wayna is issued an ultimatum by the technical team. The conditions: achieve finalist results in a forthcoming competition or end his residence in the center. In the end, Wayna fails.

In follow-up interviews, coach Rene discusses similar ideas regarding the relation between rural provenance and embodied behavior, including the very speech patterns of the athletes in question:

*En Willka, que es esta provincia de Pacha, primero que es mas **alejada**, como **relegada** a un costado. Si tu ves su geografía es una lomadita, prácticamente todo Willka, yo no se si hay luz hoy día, porque cuando estábamos no había luz. Entonces miremos al antecedente para que entendamos la idea funcionando. Yesenia llega, y en menos de dos meses se va. Aduciendo un permiso con su mama, al final era mentira porque era su retiro. Va uno. Wayna, igualito, con **tono tranquilo, pausado** igualito al tono de Yesenia, **todo es pausado, lento**, ese es **el ritmo de vida** ¿no? El también de igual manera. Quería ser artista, más pasión mostraba en el arte que en el atletismo. Y cuando **trotaba, al mismo ritmo lento**, como su ritmo circadiano en sus relaciones*

*In Willka, which is this province of Pacha, the first thing is that it’s more **isolated**, like **relegated** to the side. If you observe its geography, it’s a little hill, practically all Añiwichi, and I don’t know if there is electricity today, because when we were there, there was no electricity. So, let’s observe the antecedent in order that we understand the idea functioning here. Yesenia arrives, and in less than two months she leaves. Requesting a permission with her mother, which in the end was a lie because it was her retirement. One leaves. Wayna, exactly the same, with a **tranquil tone, gentle**, exactly the same as the tone of Yesenia, **everything is gentle, slow**, that’s **the rhythm of life**, right? He is the same way. He wanted to be an artist, he showed more passion in art than in track-and-field. And when*

*humanas, lo mismo en el atletismo, no he ran, always the same, slow rhythm, like his vibraba. Lo mismo de Chiri. circadian rhythm, in his human relations, the same in track-and-field, he didn't vibrate. The same for Chiri.*

Foregrounded here is a cross-modal iconism (Agha 2007), a meta-semiotic typification of diverse objects signs, from speech to comportment to dress, under a grouping rubric which motivates their perceived likeness. In this case, three identifiable kinds of object signs are grouped into a structuring meta-sign, an enregisterment of emblems of a spatialized social type (*ibid*), that is, of people from Willka. First, the geographic relation between the “distant” village of Willka itself, “relegated to the side” of the province, and the other population centers of the area, comes to stand in iconic relation to the communicative distance between athletes from the region and their coaches, as if the athletes were far from the voices that endeavor to guide them. Second, the vocalizing of the athletes itself—their tone and speaking rhythm—is taken as an icon of that geographic space too: always “slow,” “gentle,” “with a tranquil tone,” reflecting “the rhythm of life” in such a distant zone. Third, their athletic movements are construed as icons of the social temperament and “human relations” of their home village: “slow jogging,” “slow rhythm,” they do not “vibrate.” Wayna’s downfall is ascribed to an insurmountable predisposition to communicative unavailability, deriving, in large part, from his rural provenance.

According to Daniel, athletes from Willka might best be suited for running full marathons for precisely this reason, and were they to run marathons their bane might be recast as a blessing:

*“If they ran complete marathons those athletes could serve us, because they aren’t disrupted, they continue in the same model. But this elite performance center has other characteristics. If you don’t have that level of activation in the psychological part, it doesn’t serve. It doesn’t serve. It doesn’t serve. They do not activate.”<sup>11</sup>*

Notice the “inverse iconic” (Agha 2007 p.175) relation between the physical potential and the communicative availability of those from the village of Willka: those furthest away in the province might be best suited to distance of the longest sort in competitive events, yet this geographic distance hamstrings the very potential it yields. The center would not, in Daniel’s estimation, be able to fund these athletes long enough for them to access those reserves of energy; in the end, the Sports Institute would terminate their stipends without regular competition results.

#### **6.4 Dispositional Ascriptions of Impeded Progress to Indigenous Worldview**



*Figure 6-6: Coaching staff congregates at the lookout tower*

Wayna’s perceived inability to activate is only one response problem encountered on and off the track. There are also issues pertaining to perceived acts of willful *deactivation*, and these

are distributed into the infrastructure of the track itself, principally cropping up around the lookout tower where coaches sit for a wide view of the asphalt. Though coaches can launch their voices across the track from the tower, athletes traversing the distal portions are physically unable to respond, either carefully monitoring their breathing or exerting themselves such that managing a clear vocal retort is not an option. But near the tower, at the point of peak physical proximity on the closed loop of the track, athlete and coach are fully, perceptually available to one another, and phatic anxiety is therefore notably heightened for those hoping to “win the trust” (*ganarse la confianza*) of coaches sitting on top.

Separated by only meters, the lifting of the visual access of the coaches over the heads of the athletes to critique the movements of those beneath spawns “moments of fear” (*momentos de miedo*). From above, coaches might target athletes with a disciplinary gaze, or address them by name, or provide public commentaries of their attention allocations. An athlete distracted even momentarily might elicit harsh words, see a coach’s palms turn upwards and shoulders shrug in dismay. Many feel “hindered” (*detenido*) below where the refrain “are you working or are you jerking around?” (*estas trabajando o estas tonteando*) weighs upon them, and report conflicting emotions that surface when response is called for, such as urges to shout back aggressively to intense cueing. “*But I hold it in,*” Phawaq explains, instead unleashing anger alone, sometimes before the mirror in his dorm room where there are no consequences of reprisal. “*I feel that responding is a bad thing, you know? That’s why I save it for myself*<sup>2</sup>.” To respond with “excuses” (*excusas*) for poor performance might irritate coaches, but to not respond might provoke more serious reprimand, as Phawaq’s apprehension would suggest.

Gauging the communicative availability of an athlete, coaches probe with questions interspersed among flurries of training cues. When immersed (*metido*), athletes garner positive

assessments of formal modifications e.g., “you see the difference in the arms? You swung better starting from there and went flying” (*¿Viste la diferencia en el braceo? Braceaste mejor desde allí y te fuiste*). Routine check-ins come between repetitions e.g. “How are you feeling?”, “Nothing hurts?,” “It’s just hard?” (*¿Que te sientes? ¿No te duele nada? ¿Pesada nada más es?*), which elicit simple answers, nods, and affirmative back-channeling, a fast-phatic communion. Other times, anger with poor performance triggers apologies, as athletes bestow themselves unto their coaches in public acts of vulnerability, providing denotationally explicit evaluations of their own repetition e.g., “it doesn’t count” (*no se cuenta, no sirve*) before asking to be forgiven. On yet other occasions, first pair parts are purposefully left unanswered, designed to publicize a poor performance to onlookers e.g., “how long will we continue with this nonsense?!” (*¿hasta cuando vamos a continuar con estas tonteras?*).

Anxiety mounts when no response comes, however. Consider how Idalberto grows increasingly frustrated with Rumi when she begins a new training block in anticipation of the Cusco cross-country invitational. 400-meter intervals—200-meter sprints and recuperations, run one after the other continuously—are a new component of her weekly programming. The objective is to decrease the recuperation time between her sprints over the ensuing weeks, bolstering her tolerance of intense speeds in the lead up to the competition. A week prior, she recuperated well between repetitions, blazing through the sprints then vigorously jogging the second 200-meter intervals with impressive consistency. One week after eliciting praise from the staff, Rumi has arrived and greeted no one, not even around the tower where greetings (*saludos*) are customary. After beginning her warm-up unattended—with headphones on and without once looking towards the tower—she signals to Idalberto that she is ready to begin, making eye contact only to coordinate her takeoff with the click of his stopwatch.

A handful of underwhelming cycles later, Rumi’s recuperation times are alarmingly high. As his trainee returns to retake her start position for a new sprint, Idalberto cranks up his vocal interventions with a sequence of check-ins to clarify Rumi’s trouble:

|    |                   |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Idalberto to Rumi | <i>Que pasa Rumi</i> =<br>“What’s going on Rumi!?”           | Idalberto launches FPP, uses name to specify addressee and secure reciprocity.<br>Rumi returns to start line at end of recuperation phase; unresponsive, gaze aversion, doesn’t face tower, refuses to answer. |
| 2. |                   | = <i>Que te sientes</i><br>“What are you feeling!?”<br>(1.2) | Idalberto provides an opportunity for Rumi to self-ascribe her problem. Repeats with follow up to further probe availability.<br>Rumi does not respond with SPP.                                               |
| 3. |                   | <i>Nada y entonces</i><br>“Nothing!?! Well then!?”<br>(1.1)  | Idalberto self-replies to a virtual SPP; new FPP in tag question.                                                                                                                                              |
| 4. |                   | <i>Que pasa</i> =<br>“What’s going on!?”                     | Repeats initial turn. Latched turns & compressed TRP leave no room for SPP.                                                                                                                                    |
| 5. |                   | = <i>Hay algo</i><br>“There’s something!”<br>(4.5)           | Idalberto identifies an object they might align toward; gaze tracks Rumi as she approaches start line.<br>Rumi does not respond, keeps gaze averted.                                                           |



Figure 6-7: Rumi returns to the start line



Idalberto targets Rumi by name, designating her as the explicit addressee of his check-in [33]. Typically motor-mouthed, here he provides ample transition-relevant space for Rumi’s response [33-35, 37], leaving unfilled pauses between turns which Rumi leaves open, each first-pair part dissipating unaccompanied by its second. She does not look up at the staff for guidance or feedback. Instead, she jogs flat-footed with her head down, avoiding the gaze of her trainers entirely<sup>13</sup>. Idalberto implores Rumi to provide an account of her behavior, asking how she feels [34]; perhaps a nagging injury, a sudden cold, or a bad night of rest has knocked her off course. She says nothing, leaving the issue underdetermined. Total vocal unresponsiveness meets questions that pile upon one another. Unconvinced but invested in an answer—any answer—to his question, Idalberto provides one himself: “there’s something” (*hay algo*) [37].

Important to note is that throughout the fruitless interrogation, Rumi nonetheless follows training protocol. She responds to the start times of her coach and the exercise at hand, obeying the start whistle while following the rest-work interval structure. Her response behavior is *bi-valent*; she shows a willingness to participate in that she adheres to the training design, though she refuses to reply to the questioning of which she is the designated recipient.

|    |                   |                                             |                                                                                                                    |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. | Idalberto to Rumi | <i>Va</i><br>“Come on!”                     |                                                                                                                    |
| 7. |                   | <i>Uno treintiuno</i><br>“One thirty-one?!” | Rumi re-takes start position, averts gaze while turning towards tower. Idalberto lambasts the recuperation metric. |
| 8. |                   | <i>Va=</i><br>“Come on!”                    | Rumi leaves start line to begin next sprint. Idalberto begins next sequence on stopwatch.                          |
| 9. |                   | = <i>Venga</i><br>“Push it!”                |                                                                                                                    |



Figure 6-8: Rumi re-positions for take off

In effect, Rumi abstains from participating in any modeling of her own actions, refuses to specify problems with her interlocutor so that forthcoming solutions could optimize performance. She withholds vocal response even when the channel is clear, for Idalberto is reasonably audible and visually accessible in such close proximity. Thus ensues Idalberto’s explicit ascription of Rumi’s unresponsiveness to “character” [43], rather than to any technical problem with attention (mis)allocation or chronic injury.

|     |                      |                                                                                  |                                                                                                                     |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10. | Idalberto to Rumi    | <i>Ese no es ritmo de que es eso</i><br>“That’s not rhythm, what is that from?!” | Shouts FPP to Rumi as she leaves for the first curve of the track.                                                  |
| 11. | Idalberto to Michael | <i>Tu ves ese carácter</i><br>“Do you see that character?”                       | Recruits Michael as recipient, ascribes characterological attribute, <i>carácter</i> , in wake of unresponsiveness. |



Figure 6-9: Rumi leaves for the near curve

Recuperation cycles continue to accumulate, each one horribly underwhelming for Idalberto, who recommits to inferring the trouble with his companion atop the tower, the attending physical therapist. Bringing his notebook between them, Idalberto cites past metrics to contextualize present ones, foregrounding an extreme jump in numbers within the space of a week.

|     |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                |
|-----|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12. | Idalberto to Michael | <i>Mira lo que estaba haciendo la semana pasada mira</i><br>“Look at what she was doing last week, look.”                                                                          | Draws attention to notebook.                                                                                                   |
| 13. |                      | <i>Cincuenta eh- no.</i><br>“Fifty eh- no.”                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                |
| 14. |                      | <i>Cuarenta cuarentaidos cuarentaiuno treintainueve cuarentaycuatro cuarentaidos cuarentaiuno</i><br>“Forty, forty-two, forty-one, thirty-nine, forty-four, forty-two, forty-one.” | Nearly a twenty second upward difference in recuperation times between the two weeks, indicating a severe drop in performance. |
| 15. |                      | <i>Ahora un minuto y pico.</i><br>“Now a minute and change.”                                                                                                                       | Looks up to Michael.                                                                                                           |
| 16. | Michael to Idalberto | <i>No quiere entrenar.</i><br>“She doesn’t want to train.”                                                                                                                         | Ascription of performance impairment to will.                                                                                  |
| 17. | Idalberto to Michael | <i>Sí es eso no quiere entrenar que diga que no quiere entrenar</i>                                                                                                                | Alignment towards Michael vis-a-vis Rumi’s performance                                                                         |

|  |  |                                                                                               |  |
|--|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | “Right, it’s that, she doesn’t want to train, so let her say that she doesn’t want to train.” |  |
|--|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Physical inability hardly figures in their aligned assessment of Rumi’s training woes. “She doesn’t want to train” (*no quiere entrenar*), Michael mutters, confirming with Idalberto that the problem is a refusal to commit to the intensity of the activity. In complete contradistinction to Wayna, who in the estimation of the coaching staff was involuntarily condemned to a slow pace for his rural provenance—Rumi’s embodied unresponsiveness is attributed to will rather than to (in)ability. For the two on the tower, her potential is blocked by a communicative reticence to “say” [53] that “she does not want to train.” Perhaps this is precisely what makes her performance so much more frustrating for Idalberto, who folds his arms and shakes his head, convinced the issue is one of Rumi’s making, a petulance that bogs down her movement.

Rumi herself recognizes a communicative problem and ponders her own contributions to it when discussing things later in the week: “*I’ve been like this since November I believe, closed off, I don’t know what my problem is. That’s why I was doing treatment with the psychologists, to open myself up to speaking with people*<sup>14</sup>.” Like the training staff overseeing her movements, Rumi self-ascribes a communicative unavailability and pinpoints her own difficulty “opening herself” to speak with others and be spoken to, regurgitating a characterological figure of communicative reticence (*i.e.*, ‘*cerrada*’) just like her coaches while self-diagnosing psychological stress for which she is seeking assistance. At the same time, Rumi gestures to an interactional incongruence among the athletes and their coach, adding: “*I don’t know what the deal is with others, but the athletes comment that there is preference*.<sup>15</sup>” Referring to some subterranean commentary as “*preference*,” she leaves the issue undetermined in the interview.

Other athletes from Rumi's cohort clarify the matter: she and her training partner have, according to many, grown embittered and increasingly confrontational over the vocal support of Idalberto. As Phawaq sees it, Idalberto's vocal preference has emboldened "ugly digs" (*indirectas feas*) from the "quick-witted kids" (*chicos listos*) on the team, a lateral bickering that is bleeding onto the track:

*"Huayra's at a good level now, and he like, [Idalberto] would show her off a little. She said "who's going to beat me?" She said it aloud but not directing herself to her, like that, generally. "Who's gonna beat me?", like that. And like, she'd get into it with Rumi like that, you know? Rumi commands a different idiolect. They get into it, I mean saying like "worry about yourself" [R to H] you know? "Worry about yourself, other athletes are going to come," [R to H] "you're not, you're not in a national championship" [H to R], like, they exchange ugly insults. Tika too<sup>16</sup>."*

Drawn into goading with her peers, Rumi alludes to an incongruent distribution of attention from her coach among athletes in her training squad. Her seemingly self-inhibited recuperation might therefore be taken as a silent condemnation of this perceived slight, a withholding of embodied potential to counteract vocal attention withheld by her coach. Alternatively, it might be taken as self-doubt, as an athlete's confrontation with her own limitations, her being intimidated by others for whom vocal approbation confirms a talent she is unsure of for herself.

Mentioning no accusation of vocal preference, Idalberto takes Rumi's withdrawal as a slap in the face. He sits on the tower recording times that are, in his estimation, no transparent measure of Rumi's progress. He laments aloud if he's going "to kill himself for such nonsense" (*morirse por esas tonteras*), for being unable to overcome Rumi's "clenched face," (*cara apretada*). He decries such a sudden change in a woman who, as far as he is concerned, "used to train until she exploded, until she was at death's door" (*una mujer que entrenaba a reventarse a morirse*), and threatens to end the training session if she "keeps this shit up" (*vuelve a hacer esta*

*mierda*). Rumi’s silence is construed as a rebuke, a cunning inversion of a participation framework built upon (his) call and (her) response.

Withholding her reciprocity, Rumi exercises what limited control she has to wrest authority, albeit temporarily, from her overbearing coach, bending him to her whim, though only for a moment. When at last the series of sprints ends, Rumi cuts her cool-down jog short and leaves without saying goodbye. Exasperated with Rumi, who he complains “does not approach anyone to speak” (*no se acerca a nadie para hablar*) and instead remains “isolated in her world, in her loop” (*aislada en su mundo en su vuelto*), Idalberto enlists the attending sports psychologists to vent his frustrations.

|     |           |                                                                                                                            |                                     |
|-----|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Idalberto | <i>Daniel, pero si tu sabes que tienes problema</i><br>“Daniel, but if you know you have a problem,”                       |                                     |
| 2.  |           | <i>[Por que no-</i><br>“Why don’t-”                                                                                        |                                     |
| 3.  | Daniel    | <i>[Me hago ayudar pues=</i><br>“Well I help myself.”                                                                      |                                     |
| 4.  | Idalberto | <i>=Por que no te acer- por que no te dejas ayudar?=<br/>“Why don’t you find- why don’t you let yourself be helped?”</i>   |                                     |
| 5.  | Daniel    | <i>=Claro</i><br>“Right.”                                                                                                  |                                     |
| 6.  |           | <i>Eso es cierto</i><br>“That’s true.”                                                                                     |                                     |
| 7.  |           | <i>Ayyy</i><br>“Ayyy.”                                                                                                     | In frustration.                     |
| 8.  | Idalberto | <i>Con esta gente así cerrada</i><br>“With these people, closed off like this.”                                            | Sketch of characterological figure. |
| 9.  | Daniel    | <i>Bienvenido a la cosmovisión Andina Idalberto, [tu sabes</i><br>“Welcome to the Andean cosmovision Idalberto, you know,” | Invocation of cosmovision.          |
| 10. | Idalberto | <i>[Sii sii sii=</i><br>“Yes, yes,<br>yes.”                                                                                |                                     |
| 11. | Daniel    | <i>=Es asi=</i><br>“It’s like this.”                                                                                       |                                     |
| 12. |           | <i>La gente del campo es asi, asi hermano asi es</i>                                                                       | Reference to rural provenance.      |

|  |                                                                            |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | “People from the countryside are like this, like this brother, like this.” |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

In their alignment towards “these people, closed off like this!” (*ésta gente así cerrada*), Daniel offers Idalberto consolation: “welcome to the Andean cosmovision” (*bienvenido a la cosmovisión Andina*). On the tail end of the training session, through exasperated commiseration, text-level relations among demeanor indexicals invite inferences of a persona and ascription to a cause: Rumi’s gaze aversion and “clenched face” (*cara apretada*), absent offerings of “barely a greeting” (*a las justas el saludo*), and unchanging pace are taken up as indexical icons in an explicit meta-pragmatic commentary on rurality, an ascription of behavioral trouble to a purported rural world view that structures the affect, decision making, and predictability of so-called “people from the countryside” (*gente del campo*). Daniel and Idalberto continue to predicate that such people are “unstable” (*inestable*), “unpredictable” (*impredecible*), “undetermined” (*indeterminado*) in their decisions, that they “do not let you help” (*no te deja ayudar*), and can “leave you broken” (*te deja quebrado*) for trying. Idalberto and the rest of the staff conclude the session fuming, notably exhausted. If their energetic vocalizing were not tiring enough, the absence of an acknowledging response, even a farewell, from Rumi seems to drain them just as much.

The communicative dynamics and discrepancies among Wayna, Rumi, and their coaches invoke rurality though for different reasons. In every case, thematized pragmatics from isolated events are woven together into coherent models buttressed by persistent alignments among coaching staff and competing athletes. They come to a head, on the one hand between Wayna’s self-report on the loss of vocal input from his coach and his coach’s ascription of his waning work rate to involuntary inactivation and rural origins; on the other hand, between Rumi’s

taciturn protest of “*preference*” and the attending staff’s ascription of the cause to willful deactivation and a structuring Indigenous worldview. Contradictory accusation of vocal (in)attention interrupt athletic scheduling and arrest progress, to the chagrin of the technical director, who holds that Rumi “*now has neither goals to compete nor to train nor for anything*<sup>17</sup>,” a position she herself echoes: “*now I have no projections, because I feel unmotivated*<sup>18</sup>.” Her stubbornness on the track spurs lamentation: for Tomas, who sees no “disposition of desiring to train” (*disposición de querer trabajar*), Rumi is beyond ‘distracted’: she is ‘closed off’ (*cerrado*), her potential inaccessible to further improvement.

## **6.5 Reverse Ascriptions of Communicative Unavailability**

On the track, multiple layers of communicative labor sandwich upon each other: ‘*pay attention*’, that is, focus on the coach and what they are saying; ‘*show you’re paying attention*’, that is, provide observable feedback to your coach that you are listening to their correction; and ‘*improve performance*’, that is, integrate the correction and continue towards improved marks and metrics in pertinent exercises and trials. As has become clear, coaches do not solely ascribe performance deficits to inattention. Just as regularly, they assert that the athletes *willfully* withdraw. Yet athletes do not shoulder the attention allocations of their coaches without returning the favor: accusations of vocal preference proliferate among the various groups, reverse ascriptions of communicative distancing that skew embodied response on the track.

Inverted ascriptions often come to a head when injuries are deliberated, common during base training blocks. Metabolic conditioning circuits (*fortalecimiento*), which involve a series of extremely demanding exercises separated by minimal rest, are typical of the base training (*base*) of a longer pre-competition cycle. Both past and present athletes in the center despise base



training. Staff members often jokingly refer to base sessions as “massacres” (*masacres*) and gather to witness the agony. One morning, three athletes do a circuit of plyometric exercises in the long jump pit beside the track, wearing weighted vests loaded with metal bricks.

Commencing a series of suspended abdominal crunches—each of which entails bringing both feet between the hands in a single jump forward, then bringing them back to a quadruped bridge—Tika draws Idalberto’s attention for failing to perform her repetitions continuously, instead pausing between them on flexed legs to gasp for air in a balanced squat position.



Figure 6-10: Idalberto re-directs gaze to Tika

|    |           |                                                                             |                                                                            |
|----|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Idalberto | <i>Baja la cadera que no sirve</i><br>“Drop your hips, that doesn’t count.” | Idalberto’s gaze on Rumi.                                                  |
| 2. |           | <i>Seguido Tika=</i><br>“Continuous Tika.”                                  | Idalberto’s gaze re-directed to Tika.<br>Proper name designates addressee. |

Locking onto Tika to the exclusion of the others participating in the circuit, Idalberto steps closer to her, his voice swelling in volume and tempo, menacing every inch of the way.



Figure 6-11: Idalberto approaches Tika

|     |           |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.  | Idalberto | = <i>Seguido Tika</i> =<br>“Continuous Tika.”                                                               | Idalberto physically approaches Tika. Bends at the waist as yells increase in volume and frequency. Tika pauses with feet in anterior position. |
| 4.  |           | = <i>Tiene que ser seguido Tika</i><br>“It has to be continuous Tika.”<br>(.100)                            |                                                                                                                                                 |
| 5.  |           | <i>Es seguido Tika</i><br>“It’s continuous Tika.”<br>(.203)                                                 | Tika bounces at each end of the repetition without launching immediately to the next.                                                           |
| 6.  |           | <i>Seguido adelante atrás no me puedo parrar</i><br>“Continuous, forward backward, I can’t stop!”<br>(.233) | Transposes first person onto Tika.                                                                                                              |
| 7.  |           | <i>Es seguido</i> =<br>“It’s continuous!”                                                                   | Idalberto launches rhythmic, latched cross-turn sanction of Tika.                                                                               |
| 8.  |           | = <i>Seguido</i> =<br>“Continuous!”                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9.  |           | = <i>Seguido</i> =<br>“Continuous!”                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10. |           | = <i>Seguido</i><br>“Continuous!”<br>(.286)                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                 |
| 11. |           | <i>Seguido Tika</i> =<br>“Continuous Tika!”                                                                 | Marked volume increase. Proper names populate each turn. Tika takes long pause in bridge position.                                              |
| 12. |           | = <i>Seguido Tika</i><br>“Continuous Tika!”<br>(.318)                                                       | Idalberto begins shaking and bouncing on his feet.                                                                                              |

Idalberto’s shouts come tumbling out, a stream of cues that transform Tika’s fatigue into a matter of non-compliance. They put Tika on call to approximate the strength and cadence of the instruction. The vocal input provides a model for her corporeal output. The rising intensity and accelerating frequency seem almost to lift the waning work rate of the athlete and implore her to match the intensity of the vocal stream. A fast-compressing transition space, strings of latched turns, and increasing volume and spatial proximity create a rhythmic pulse between cues, which poetically model the passage of feet from flexion to extension of the trunk. The pulse of the cues invites Tika to cross-modally calibrate her waning movement to the explosive language; in other words, the screams are “inverse icons” (Lempert 2008) of Tika’s lackluster effort, an acoustic firstness (Shankar 2016) surging in inverse relation to her fading energy.



Figure 6-12: Tika freezes in place, Idalberto ceases cueing.

|     |           |                                                                                           |                                                                                           |
|-----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. | Idalberto | <i>Tika trabaja pa’ que te canse Tika</i><br>“Tika work so you get tired Tika!”<br>(.190) | Tika continues pausing.<br>Idalberto begins punctuating syllables with stopwatch.         |
| 14. |           | <i>Trabaja pa’ que saque Tika</i><br>“Work so it drains you Tika!”<br>(.100)              | Rhythmic pulse to minuscule unfilled pauses between turns as transition space compresses. |
| 15. |           | <i>Así no sirve</i><br>“It doesn’t count like that.”                                      |                                                                                           |

|     |  |                                                   |                                                                                                       |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     |  | (.320)                                            |                                                                                                       |
| 16. |  | <i>No sirve</i><br>“It doesn’t count.”<br>(.230)  |                                                                                                       |
| 17. |  | <i>Es seguido</i><br>“It’s continuous!”<br>(.885) | Decompressed transition space.                                                                        |
| 18. |  | <i>Ahhhhh</i><br>“Ahhhhh!”                        | Tika pauses again in bridge position.<br>Idalberto raises arms and turns back to Tika. Cueing ceases. |

Idalberto implores Tika to “work so she get’s tired” (*trabaja pa’ que te canse*), explaining that she cannot stop, casting her performative shortcoming as a failure of will and not of muscle, while bellowing that her repetitions do not count. But “continuous” cues a movement alteration that never comes, another first pair part longing this time for an embodied response. Tika continues to pause between her repetitions, inviting harsher sanctions from her angry coach. Screaming Tika’s name while fully re-orienting himself to her, Idalberto singles out Tika as the sole addressee in the group, drawing public attention to her in a balletic sequence of frustration. Tika does not calibrate, however, pausing until Idalberto turns back in dismissal, ceasing his cues and thereby relieving pressure on the transition space, which decompresses.

Here are two simultaneous attempts at opening and closing. On the one hand, Idalberto posturally and vocally opens himself to Tika by orienting his body and speech to her alone, while making demands that Tika open herself to his instruction by obeying it. At the same time, he closes himself off to her pain, inhabiting an apathetic sergeant who models apathy for his trainee, who in turn should feel apathetic to her *own* subjective experience, a “moral assumption concerning the value of concealing inner states from others” (Throop 2012 p.408). Coaches are, after all, former athletes and familiar with the pain of working “so that it drains you”; they are not indifferent, but role models urging their athletes to forge the resolve they already have. Yet

Idalberto's embodied stylings—arms flung to his sides in histrionic frustration as he turns his back, as if he were talking to himself—arrive to a breaking point. As there is no demonstrable uptake of his cueing, no valid response *despite* Tika's pragmatics of pain, ultimately, he teeters over into self-talk, disregarding Tika for the remainder of the training session. The cue does not simply direct attention to movement. It spotlights an ethical choice, and foregrounds the will to make that choice, one way or another.

Perceiving a choice not to persevere in his trainee, Idalberto's disregard extends out of the training session, and a coolness pervades the contact between him and Tika in the ensuing weeks. In the absence of this contact, Tika drifts away, growing increasingly unreachable. "*They say we have coordinated to fake an injury among ourselves*<sup>19</sup>" she tells me, lamenting at how a recent decrease in attention from coaches has caused her to "shut herself down" (*cerrarme*) from all talk with "an angry face" (*la cara enojada*). "*I feel little time remains for me in the center*<sup>20</sup>," she mutters. When an athlete's performance dwindles consistently in the center, complaints surface among the coaches that an athlete "has invented and no longer wants to progress" (*ese ha inventado ya no quiere salir adelante*), often leading to expulsion. Yet Tika ascribes her own unresponsiveness to other causes; namely—and like her peers—to waning vocal attention from her coach and his favoritism for other athletes in the cohort:

*"His way of being has changed a lot. Now he only focuses on only one person. From our group he focuses on one or two people, I don't like that. I wish he showed his attention up above to all of us. I don't know if it's favoritism. That to Huayra much more...it...that makes us uncomfortable."*<sup>21</sup>

On the one hand, Tika expresses frustration with what she perceives as a lack of "attention shown up above," suggesting that whatever support her coach provides might not be transparent

to others, that she wishes for the prestige of his singular address and adulation. In other words, Tika appears to long to *offer* her communicative reciprocity.

Out of ear shot, Idalberto himself paints an entirely different picture, mockingly assuming the tone of his detractors:

*“You and Huayra, because you’re always with Huayra,” that I have favoritism with Huayra and with Nina, fundamentally a favoritism with them. Right, and what’s the deal? That she approaches me. She converses more with me. But they don’t approach and, well, I don’t have a reason to be so above you.<sup>22</sup>*

Interestingly, “sitting above,” where once used to describe technical cueing and its capacity to repair movement hampered by fatigue (see chapter three), now refers to parameters for phatic contact: for Idalberto, insofar as his disgruntled trainees do not initiate communicative contact with him, they do not warrant any special intervention on his part, do not warrant that he “be so above” them.

Sidelined with what she describes as an injured knee, Tika nears Idalberto on the lookout tower weeks after her failure in the long jump pit, telling him of her plan to acquire a gadget able to pass pain from one person to the next: “so you are able to feel the pain that we feel” (*para que usted sienta el dolor que sentimos nosotros*). His scoff is instantaneous: “And I wasn’t an athlete?! And I didn’t feel the same things you are feeling?!” (*y yo no fui atleta y yo no senti las mismas cosas que tu*). In theory, the sensory experience of the athlete and the technical knowledge of the coach are calibrated: the coach sits with one foot at each end of the spectrum, having lived as an athlete before being employed to train them. But Tika expresses frustration with her inability to make her pain a social reality:

*“My knee is hurt, and when I’m in the same position for a long time my knee hurts, or when I stand up and put weight on it. And I rested for two weeks and...I don’t know. Sometimes Prof. Idalberto shows his face of disgust, as if I were faking it. I don’t like that. Sometimes, as a joke, I say “I wish there were a little gadget, Prof. Idalberto, to be able to connect my knee with you so that you could feel how it truly hurts me.” Because sometimes he doesn’t even believe you.<sup>23</sup>”*

There is a striking irony here, in that Tika would talk about this kind of direct, technologically mediated channel, one that would circumvent language entirely: it is a counter-discourse of the communicative unavailability of the coach himself, who, according to her, “turns away from you”, “does not respond to you” (*te volteo, no te responde*) who assumes the same pragmatics of pain that he chastises in his athletes e.g. “face of disgust” (*cara de incomodidad*). Tika, in effect, inverts the dispositional ascriptions of the cosmovision, attributing to her coach the same communicative reticence typically attributed to her peers.

Table 6-1: Characterological types and attendant communication practices

| ‘METIDO’ / IMMERSED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | ‘CERRADO’ / CLOSED OFF                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Phatic overload:</b> ‘<i>Confianza</i>’, Coaches saturate the auditory channel with shouts, harangues, cues; reported as a kind of affection by athletes.</p> <p><b>Jocular Register:</b> Constant playfulness, poking fun at athletes.</p> <p><b>Gendered dynamics:</b> Male and female competitors are playfully pitted against each other at staggered distances in sprints, often commented on as a test of masculinity; it’s a (playful) mark of embarrassment to lose to a woman.</p> <p><b>Use of kin-terms:</b> ‘<i>hijito</i>’ / ‘<i>hijita</i>’ / ‘<i>papa</i>’: injects interaction with filial responsibility, transforms athlete indiscipline/under-performance into a family affair.</p> | <p><b>Diminished usage</b> of jocular register and channel saturation with athletes during training, equated with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• • diminished enthusiasm on the part of the trainer.</li> <li>• • (un)voiced suspicion that athletes are faking injuries to avoid hard work.</li> <li>• pragmatics of communicative unavailability self-reported among athletes (“sour face,” “closed off”).</li> </ul> <p><b>Absence</b> of (trash) talking once treated as fun and diversion. Absence is construed as seriousness.</p> <p><b>Accusations of favoritism</b> [‘<i>favoritismo</i>’ / ‘<i>preferencia</i>’], reflection in training sessions with disproportionate cueing, proximity of trainer and “favorites”.</p> |

Positioned on either side of battling ascriptions of communicative inaccessibility, Tika and Idalberto grow further apart, and not long after Tika’s public failure during the metabolic



conditioning circuit, coaches and administrators meet once again to discuss cuts to the roster. Of Tika there is little deliberation: “cut with a capital ‘C’” (*baja con b mayuscula*) they say. According to all, she “surrenders” (*se rinde*) and cannot be relied on to “make an effort” (*esforzarse*). Tika loses control of the interpretant, unable to persuade authority figures of the reality of her pain, unable to foreground fatigue over force of will.

Minimal vocal input can be construed as a dismissal of an athlete entirely, and so an athlete who feels dismissed may actively contribute to solidifying that construal, playing to the newly lowered expectation. They may also express dissatisfaction with the new state of affairs, arguing that an injury be taken more seriously. But where talk is withdrawn from an athlete, doubt is cast on the very potential beckoned to. Wayna makes the point clear: *“If your coach doesn’t tell you you have a bit for more either...he never told me. To some other kids, yes, he told them “you have talent, you have to train.” But sometimes I felt so stupid, to say, “but why doesn’t he tell me the same?” It makes me lose time for leaving to search for another path.*<sup>24</sup>

An athlete’s receptibility to coaching thus affords access in two ways: it allows athletes to gain access to reserves of the energy they could not tap into without the commands and shouts of their coaches, who guide their dive into the recesses of subjectivity. It also allows the coach to get their hands on a potential that the athletes neither know for sure they have, nor know how to go about developing. If coaches perceive that athletes grow *unreceptible*—unwilling or unable to integrate coaching into performance—they cool on them, dialing down the intensity of vocal intervention, or shutting down entirely if they suspect feigned injuries or waning spirit. Insofar as athletes come to know their potential in collaboration with the coach, where that party’s input is withdrawn, potential may fade back into obscurity.



## 6.6 Conclusion: Unreceptibility as Obstruction to Embodied Potential

The communication tonus on the track is, simply put, tense, and though one might be led to consider culturalist ideologizations as some sort of discursive overlay atop the “nature” of communication systems, “technical” failures of contact do not precede the ideologized ascriptions of those failures to connect, as if it were the nature of communication *qua* mechanical system to be overlaid with cultural constructs. Technical contact in the performance center is always distributed in an ethnometapragmatics of sports cultivation, a language ideology of cueing that posits a relation between word and action. In embodied environments wherein attention is choreographed in unfolding courses of actions-in-sequence, “the temporality of turn and sequence formats is adjusted to the emergent understanding, being accelerated or slowed down as responsive conducts are produced or delayed,” (Mondada 2011 p.550; see also Evans 2017).

Like delayed or undelivered second pair parts that require explaining away, unrealized cues demand an “account” (Firth 1995) for their absence, and on the track in Cusco, pair parts that never come are construed as absent according to somatic ideologies that relate rurality and embodied movement, rendering coherent “the incessant confrontations with the obstinacy or recalcitrance of the body, the experience that movement possibilities are constrained by incorporated normative culture” (Streeck 2015 p.425). In Cusco, one can be “distracted” with attention that “disperses,” or one can be “closed off” entirely, each for a perceived cultural stubbornness that complicates response, let alone reply. In every case, where response is not mobilized—nor even mobilizable—a tension between iconic and indexical construals of athletic training sessions organizes assessments of potential: performance can be taken to index medical or physical problems with workable solutions, or a lack of activation with no possible remedy. It

can also be taken as an icon for the will or temperament of an athlete, an iconic reflection of their unresponsive character. In every case, richly textured, “composite” (Enfield 2009) multimodal sign behavior scaffolds meaning, though such multimodal sign configurations come to mean things through situated interpretation and construal (e.g., cosmovision equals gaze aversion and greeting/pair part withholding; see also Lempert 2012 on the composite as a “methodological operator”).

Although anthropological and sociolinguistic explorations of raciolinguistic ideologies have attended to cross-modal iconisms that obtain among the multimodal sign activities of “raciolinguistic assemblages” (Alim et al 2020; see also Dick & Wirtz 2011), these scholars have yet to examine how language is perceived to fail to access racialized embodied potentials. Phatic contact is where *unreceptibility* comes into focus, and attention to somatic ideologies of response behavior places racialized linguistic practices “not in the bodies of racialized subjects but in the “interpretive and categorizing practices of racially hegemonic perceiving subjects”” (Park 2019 p.409-10; see also Rosa and Flores 2017, 628). The training center, as an institutional site, is a crossroad “in which different and often competing institutional normativities converge,” (Lempert 2013 p.108), for having established an open communicative channel to distribute perception and refine technique collaboratively with their coaches, athletes come to treat vocal attention as a privilege and a commodity. Both parties therefore negotiate—or deny—responsibility for maintaining the quality of their communicative relationship, and if vocal support declines athletes may take anti-authoritarian postures, distancing themselves physically and interactionally from their coaches in anti-hegemonic stances.

What we might call a “cultural organization of attention” (Throop & Duranti 2015) undergirds the assumption that, in the performance arena of competitive athletics, language

affects action, for better or worse, disrupting it in some cases, bolstering it in others. In the case at hand, coaches are simultaneously culling performance and culling athlete-citizens, and so reinvoke the world of competition, inter-discursively entailing it in their cueing. Ultimately, the question of communicative availability creates the dichotomy athletes must choose from as they mature in the center: training, on the one hand, or working and studying on the other. As they grow, demands on their attention from outside of the compound grow louder, and some choose to pursue other calls to action, leading to exits both voluntary and forced from their athletic careers. To make sense of this, I turn in my final body chapter to the athlete-citizen.

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<sup>1</sup> “*El entreno es el reflejo de la competencia; si no se logra en el entreno no se puede lograr en la competencia.*”

<sup>2</sup> Similar claims regarding the emotional unavailability of Quechuas, their purported uncivilizability, their being “alien to modernity” (Franco 2006), echo in the work of Andeanists studying the interactional emergence of ethnification. For example, Margarita Hauyhua’s (2013) examination of talk among travelers in Peruvian highland public transport reveals how purported master tropes of race are built out of racialized attributes ascribed in interaction. In the case at hand, an ascribed unwillingness to respond to coaching language is one example of what linguistic anthropologists call a *contact trope*, “an ‘ethno’-assumption where the fact of communicative contact (or its absence) is itself thematized, reflected on, and—at what we might think of as a higher ‘order of indexicality’ (Silverstein 2003)—made into a sign of something else” (Zuckerman 2016, 295).

<sup>3</sup> In endurance running specifically, accounts of predispositions to success come from (Lieberman et al 2020; Bale & Sang 1996).

<sup>4</sup> “*Estén atentos por estar tonteando ahorita no sirvió la repetición.*”

<sup>5</sup> “*Para mi el profe Rene es como mi segundo padre. Trabajamos como familia.*”

<sup>6</sup> “*Una flojera te entra. Entrenaba, y han llegado muchachos que son menores de mi. Más antes si lo cumplía, hasta un poquito más. Sí me tocaba diez kilómetros hacia diez kilómetros, o un poco mas, once. A mi entrenador le gustaba eso. Y mi entrenador ya confiaba tanto en eso. Entonces cuando quede solo, entrenaba y mi entrenador me mandaba: “tienes que hacer 10 kilómetros. ¿Hiciste? Sí hice.” Sin embargo ya no hacia diez sino ocho, siete. Pero le decía sí, diez.*”

<sup>7</sup> “*Baja mi rendimiento deportivo, que ya no es igual, en algún momento te decepcionas a ti mismo. Allí viene la regresión, ya no haces como debes hacer.*”

<sup>8</sup> “*Este chico sube, y sube a la misma velocidad que baja. Es increíble. En llano igual. Le metes pista, le metes cross. Todo va igual. Es curioso.*”

<sup>9</sup> “*El problema esta aquí: “este es mi ritmo. Y me da igual. Voy subiendo, voy fresco, o moriéndome, voy bajando, y voy igual. Y voy plano. Y voy igual. Y estoy en la costa. Y voy igual.”*”

<sup>10</sup> “*Ya no me habla como antes. Antes era mas divertido, se reía así, ahora no, mas serio es conmigo.*”

<sup>11</sup> “*Si harían maratón completa esos atletas nos pueden servir, porque no se perturban, siguen en un mismo modelo. Pero este centro de alto rendimiento tiene otras características. Si no tienes ese nivel de activación en la parte psicológica, no sirve. No sirve. No sirve. No se activan.*”

<sup>12</sup> “*Pero me aguanto, y siento que el responder es una cosa mal ¿no? Por eso es que me lo guardo para mí.*”

<sup>13</sup> As Idalberto makes himself communicatively available, Rumi entirely disregards his disciplinary gaze—“the look” (see Kidwell 2005)—and any incidental eye contact. Their gaze avoidance is perfectly asymmetrical, and the

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quality of that asymmetry inverts the power relation, albeit momentarily (see Duranti 1992 for a conversation regarding (a)symmetry in gaze avoidance patterns).

<sup>14</sup> “Yo estoy así desde Noviembre creo, cerrada, no se que tengo, por eso estaba haciendo tratamiento con el psicólogo, para abrirme a hablar con las personas.”

<sup>15</sup> “No se que pasa con los demás, pero los chicos comentan hay preferencia.”

<sup>16</sup> “Huayra esta a buen nivel ahorita, y él como que se agrandaba un poco de ella, decía que “¿a mi quien me va a ganar?”. Lo dijo en voz alta, pero no dirigiéndose a ella, así, disimuladamente “¿a mi quien me va a ganar?” así. Y como que se agarra con Rumi así ¿no? Rumi manda otra idiolecta. Se agarran o sea diciendo que “preocúpate” ¿no? “preocúpate que van a venir otras atletas,” “no estas en un campeonato nacional,” o sea, ya se mandan indirectas feas. Igual Tika.”

<sup>17</sup> “Ahora no tiene ni metas para competir ni para entrenar ni nada.”

<sup>18</sup> “Ahora, no tengo proyecciones, porque me siento desanimada.”

<sup>19</sup> “Dicen que todas nosotras nos hemos enseñado para poder estar lesionadas.”

<sup>20</sup> “Siento que me queda poco tiempo en el centro.”

<sup>21</sup> Su forma de ser ha cambiado mucho. Ahora se enfoca solo en una persona. De nuestro grupo se enfoca en una o dos personas, eso no me gusta. Yo quisiera que a todos y a todas por arriba nos muestre su attention. No se si sera favoritismo que a Huayra mucho este nos incomoda eso.

<sup>22</sup> “Usted y Huayra porque tu siempre estas con Huayra, a que yo tengo favoritismo con Huayra y con Nina, fundamentalmente un favoritismo con ellas. Claro, ¿y que es lo que pasa? Que esta se acerca mas a mi. Ella conversa mas conmigo. Pero ellas no se acercan y, bueno, yo no tengo por que estar tan arriba de ti.”

<sup>23</sup> “Yo estoy mal de mi rodilla, y cuando estoy en una sola posición me duele mi rodilla o cuando lo levanto cuando lo pongo fuerte. Y dos semanas estuve descansando y no se. El Prof Idalberto muestra a veces su cara de incomodidad, como si yo estuviera fingiendo. Eso no me gusta. A veces de broma yo digo quisiera que haya un aparatito, Profe Idalberto, para que pueda conectar mi rodilla con usted para que pueda sentir como me duele verdaderamente. Porque a veces ni te cree.”

<sup>24</sup> “Si tu entrenador tampoco te dice que tienes un poco para mas...nunca me dijo. A otros muchachos, si, les dijo “tu tienes talento, tienes que entrenar.” Pero a veces me sentía tan estúpido, decir, “¿pero por que no me dice tal?” Me hace perder el tiempo para irme a buscar otro camino.”

## Chapter 7 : Disciplining Talent

### 7.1 Introductory Vignette: A Victory Speech after Competition Success



*Figure 7-1: Athetes playing soccer during off hours at the Cusco center*

Arriving to the baggage claim in Cusco's airport one finds a podium upon which rests a glass bowl of coca leaves for any traveler to take. The airport is a gateway to a new world, a steppingstone to Machu Picchu and the Inca trails, and so too is the coca a chemical steppingstone to ease acclimation to high-altitude ecologies. For Anka, the leaves mark return to the familiar. By the time the plane relayed Anka back to the altitude of his provenance his words had flown space-borne from Guyana before descending again to satellite towers in Cusco, which

relayed them to the computer atop coach Rene's desk. Anka said: "*many thanks for the interview, and thankful also that you all are broadcasting this. Satisfied with the result, today the body didn't react the way it ought to, but we gave our best to capture a medal for Peru and to bring happiness to the crowd that came today to cheer for us<sup>1</sup>.*" Camera light illuminated sweat still fresh on Anka's face. His voice was tinny and small coming out of the computer speakers, or so it seemed to those of us acquainted with it in the flesh.

Waiting beyond the baggage claim, next to cabbies hawking inflated fares to tourists already out of breath, was a contingent from the training center bearing colorful cardboard welcome signs with the names of their champion emblazoned upon them in magic marker, each letter's loops and strokes encrusted with glitter. Anka returned bearing a gold medallion that shimmered like the glitter on his name, like imperial coins smelted from raw ore extracted centuries ago from the hills around the airport. His medal was imprinted not with monarchical coats of arms, but with the acronyms of international athletics federations, sound money in the global sports market. The medal now hangs around Anka's neck, sometimes clanging against the zippers that conjoin the red and white nylon flaps of his jumpsuit. The tones echo in the press room below the dormitories, where sit bureaucrats and journalists gathered to applaud Anka's afternoon victory speech, words of which will soon circulate in city newspapers.

*"On half the track a strong wind was blowing, and the other half was hot. And no one wanted to pull, because none of us wanted to lose, we pulled very little, slower instead, strategically<sup>2</sup>."* Understanding nods ensue from audience members who attend eagerly to Anka's narration of the climactic travails and embodied mechanics of his first-place finish. He smiles, deflecting adulation: "*President of the IPD, coaches, teammates, IPD workers, CEAR Cusco workers, thank you so much. Thanks also for the reception that you gave us<sup>3</sup>.*" Humbly he

redistributes the glory, listing the contributing parties of his success, a self-effacement for the collectivity. Nodding to the coming Pan-American Games, the president of the regional sports council draws the event to a close: *“we know the youth of the CEAR soon will leave for Lima to reap more medals, but they will be represented by us all in the parade on the day of the Peruvian Institute of Sport. A round of applause!”*

Days later, after donning his medal and carrying the Peruvian flag through Cusco’s *Plaza de Armas* on the Sports Institute’s 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Anka jogs past the lookout tower as Idalberto bellows to a pair of athletes completing an interval workout. Three years into his residency Anka does what he has to with minimal supervision. He appears to have precisely what coaches and staff want: talent, rural upbringing, “conditions” for success, receptibility to communicative input, an eagerness and motivation that come “from within,” Daniel explains. In stark contrast to the unfortunate pair on the asphalt.

*“That’s why you go home? To not train? That’s why you go home<sup>5</sup>.”* Chaki and Michi take their licks in stride as they pass the finish line. Recently returned like Anka, not from abroad but from brief trips to their home villages, the two are, in Idalberto’s estimation, markedly *detrained*.

*“What class of athlete. That you go home, and are not capable of training. And having recently entered an elite performance center. Do you believe you deserve it? You don’t deserve it. You should be back in your homes. That’s where you should be.”*<sup>6</sup> Chaki holds his hands on his hips, if fatigued then not for the activity of his task, but for the weight of the critique dropped upon him. Hours later, deliberating the “classes of athletes” to which his coach alludes, Chaki will reaffirm to me suspicions that he shares with Rumi: *“like Rumi says, more enthusiasm for Huayra and for Phawaq, it seems to us anyway. For Nina, Huayra, and Phawaq. For the three.*

*As she is the champion, I don't know if it will be for that but he was supporting me less<sup>7</sup>.*" For now, Chaki guards his thoughts until, abruptly, the chiding ends.

*"What's more, were not going to do anything more. Get on up there, towards the CEAR. Go. Get out. Don't train anymore<sup>8</sup>.*" Chaki and Michi suspend their intervals and proceed to the grass within the track, onto their cool down jogs in Anka's footsteps. When the technical director asks Idalberto what has happened, the lament is immediate.

*"They leave for their homes, and they go to lallygag, and they forget they are athletes. They forget they are athletes<sup>9</sup>."*

## **7.2 Sports Embodiment as an Ethical Problem**

In Cusco's training center—a school of morality “designed to fabricate the spirit of discipline, group attachment, respect for others as for self, and autonomy of will” (Wacquant 2004 p.15; see also Durkheim 1961 on moral education; see Brownell 1995 for a sports context)—stern authority presupposes a world within which all must sacrifice for victory. Like the infrastructure of the compound is set off from the surrounding neighborhoods, the athletes who inhabit it pertain to a class set apart from the populations outside, “super-citizens” (Lutz 2002) forging the nation's future while pushing through pain for glory. The question of whether they deserve to be inside echoes on the track, where Idalberto queries his athletes of their place in this world arranged to maximize the “gift” of their physical endowment to its full potential. Returning from foreign fields with the fruit of his labor, Anka invites approbation for the heavy medal he adds to the sprawling trove in the commons, while in contradistinction, Chaki and Michi are lambasted after returning from countryside provinces, visibly regressed after weeks without programmatic training. Anka has heeded the call, responded to an ethical imperative to



represent not just himself but the polity he wears on his back, a nation materialized in the red and white nylons of the jumpsuit he sports across borders. But Chaki and Michi, contends Idalberto, have failed to uphold that same commitment and instead forgotten their responsibilities, that they are athletes altogether.

Everyday ascriptions of failed duties like these are hardly self-explanatory. Diminished effort *qua* forgotten responsibility is a meta-pragmatically typified behavior (Silverstein 1993) that affords ethical reflexivity (Keane 2015); lagging pace taken up as a second order index of ethical failure, of forgetting that one pertains and is beholden to a special class. This layered sign behavior belies no “immanent” ethics of athletic movement (Lambek 2010), but rather “cobble together...the ethical from diverse and often far-flung materials” (Lempert 2013 p.373). Through regimented communicative labor, authoritative experts home in on embodied action and distribute it within encompassing moral fields. They *ethicalize* actions as self-evident manifestations of the (un)ethical character of performing athletes in and through discursive interaction, scaffolding webs of valorization within which the ordinary and the happenstance are charged with ethical and moral significance (Lempert 2015; see also Lambek 2015 and Sidnell et al 2019 for a theoretical commitment to immanence).

Much like the World Anti-Doping Agency invokes the “spirit of sport” to monitor so-called “natural talents” (WADA 2018; see also chapter one)—to codify, as ethical infractions in authoritative documents, their pharmacological enhancements—sequences of sporting behavior in Cusco become the interactional backbone for perduring speech chains that scale embodied cultivation to national participation on the global sports stage. Convening experts and novices in ethicalized body sculpting practices provokes a transformation of “political ontology” (Walker 2013) by providing new participation frameworks for the elaboration of an abstract individual

beholden to moral imperatives of team and collectivity. Rendezvousing on the asphalt, Anka and Chaki situate themselves on opposite sides of a chasm, each differentially equipped to participate in these speech chains: Chaki, still habituating to the center, cannot articulate with conviction his gift vis-à-vis the vocal approbation of a coach. Anka can and does, in television interviews and victory speeches before applauding crowds domestic and hemispheric.

To illuminate how individual travails are scaled to national trials, this chapter examines the infrastructural and discursive articulations where Indigenous aspirations meet nationalist ambitions, beginning in the literal and figurative heights of the sports bureaucracy in Lima, then descending to the minutiae of training on the track in Cusco, then returning to the administrative offices that laboriously regulate that minutia. Athletes are made into more than physical talents, they are scaffolded as moral persons, separated as a distinct class of citizens with institutionally sanctioned privileges and responsibilities, an embodiment modality Katherine Henne has called “athlete citizenship” (Henne 2015). And just as athletes are mobilized around ethical regimes, so too are members of the general public mobilized around invented traditions of sports collectivity (Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983), sorted into imagined communities (Anderson 2016 [1983]) that cohere in ritualized events like sports mega-events and their “banal” (Billig 1995) nationalist trimmings. Below, I foreground the communicative means by which Indigenous athletes come to be scaled as national citizens, attending to stance taking in multiple domains to reveal discursive bridges linking ethicalized behaviors across scales. Examining the connective tissues linking two ethicalized moments—a national disaster near the capital and a disciplinary infraction in the training compound—I spotlight interdiscursive resonances between mass mediated communication technologies emanating from Lima and training practices in the center in Cusco.

In each case I focus on interpellation, or the discursive means by which publics are addressed and drawn into the polity through a process of “self-selection,” by “responding not to an authoritarian command so much as a populist call to arms” (Sidnell 2019 p.3; see also Althusser 1994 for his social theory of interpellation), a call to forge an athletic future for the country. In Peru, individual athletes like Anka and Chaki pertain to partially overlapping bodies politic; to sanctioned sports federations, constitutionally recognized Indigenous populations, and distinct anthropometric populations. From recruitment throughout their training, they pivot between these modalities of personhood, vying for group membership while fulfilling obligations along the way. They move in the public sphere of civil society, where the “free” discourse<sup>10</sup> of equal citizens is iconically reproduced on the playing field as “fair play” (Henne 2016) and healthy competition. As emissaries for rural families, athletes create new links to urban capital. As professionals, they are building blocks in a bureaucratic effort to scaffold sporting culture for a consuming national public. In sum, they are corporeal evangelizers (MacAloon 2008): their activities are the medium through which they acquire and disseminate value(s), and so their productive energies are commoditized by a wide cast of actors. How does an athlete learn to weigh these pressures, to decide for or against the sacrifices entailed and forge a path beneath their feet? Where does an athlete’s promise articulate with the nation’s promise?

In the wake of dangerous flooding throughout the Pacific coast of South America in 2017, conversations regarding the appropriate allocation of funding for the 2019 Pan-American games gripped Peruvian politics: should millions committed to infrastructural development remain designated for a still far-off sports competition, or be re-allocated for more pressing disaster relief? Here, on the heels of a “critical event” (Das 1995) was a state appropriation of individual pain, wherein political authorities nested individual narratives in broader political

framings of the nation's future, repurposing moral discourses about individual embodied feats for a nation-building project still under construction (Foster 2006). In this political mobilization of morality and ethical responsibility, where “political possibilities and moral worlds generatively intertwine” (Mattingly & Throop 2018 p.485), a natural disaster served as an ethical affordance for deliberations regarding the good path forward, deliberations that seeped into the recesses of the ordinary (Das 2006).

Fending off demands from competing political factions to voluntarily relinquish the hosting rights and refocus on relief efforts, the incumbent presidential administration sought to cull popular support for the Games instead, enlisting the Sports Institute to produce televisual and internet content that foregrounded national athletes' ethical obligations to perform, and the nation's ethical obligations to help them do so. This duty was conveyed in “presidential” rhetoric and messaging (Silverstein 2003; Lempert & Silverstein 2012) in the halls of congress, on radio broadcasts, as well as through other communication technologies both digital and built into Lima's material surround. Through coordinated “addressivity” (Lempert 2011)—a patterned communicative splitting of political factions into ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Silverstein 2005) that hearkened to a “virtual” public (Agha 2005; Lempert 2009) sympathetic to the nation's plight—the Sports Institute warned that Peru's withdrawal from hosting would be a moral failure and a stinging embarrassment. By pivoting strategically between first-person and third-person stances (Keane 2015), the Institute strode to “market democracy” (Paley 2001) to citizens who were called upon to pick up the slack of compatriots (i.e., governmental factions who would willingly choose not to invest in this future).

These hypothesized moral failings inter-discursively resonated with proceedings in the training center in Cusco after a disciplinary infraction involving a handful of athletes who faced

expulsion for illicit alcohol consumption. During interrogations, staff members contended that the misbehavers had failed to ethically uphold their commitments to self and nation, failed to mirror their endurance for pain on the track as an abstention from foolery off it. Detailing intricate stance taking maneuvers that marked a prolonged interrogation in which the “epistemic rights” (Sidnell 2011) to define (mis)behaviors were differentially distributed and appropriated, I showcase the communicative resources with which ethical claims were negotiated in this back-and-forth, “he-said-she-said” (Goodwin 1990) encounter. Like the Sports Institute’s messaging in Lima, administrators and athletes jockeyed in a poetic tug of war in which they self-segmented into ‘us-them’ factions, tiptoeing between ethical and interactional stances (Lempert 2008) as they sought to allocate blame appropriately. Their shifting participation frameworks illuminate a quest to interpellate athlete-citizens who respond to a political imperative to overcome discomfort for long-term cultivation, a “political affordance of interaction” (Sidnell 2019) on the track that is linked to an explicit nation making project.

Sports pedagogy involves sacrifice, suffering, and asceticism for the glory of the nation, an “institutionalized scaling” (Carr & Lempert 2016 p.4-5) that harnesses embodied labor for national clout. The spoils of competition await those who learn to reflectively cultivate their spirit of sport with the moral compass of a “spirit of discipline,” even if the body suffers for it. Quechua athletes pursue finely tuned, temporalized embodiments as a means of remuneration, and these embodiments wilt without an arena for their gainful execution, a corporeal precarity concretely interwoven into the daily happenings of individual lives (Han 2018). Yet while “people and institutions that come out “on top” of scalar exercises often reinforce the distinctions that so ordained them” (*ibid*), social actors are, barring extreme circumstances of unilateral power relations, able to reorient themselves, challenging or sidestepping preordained scales as

they pursue alternative paths. Alive to a body that deteriorates, athletes learn to discern their own embodied labor as a commodity through densely regimented meta-semiotic activity (see figure 6, Kockelman 2006 p.88). What story are these athletes telling? Is it one of the indexically forged continuity of Incan messengers turned modern day *chaski* endurance runners sent to “harvest” medals abroad, as the sports council’s regional president would proclaim? Or one of a nimble escape from countryside poverty on “the good path” to opportunities for income and education in the urban hub? Walking the line between overlapping ethical subjectivities oriented to expending embodied labor for sometimes cross purposes, athletes ask: *forge ahead* as an athlete-citizen committed to a nation not of their own making, or as someone else?

### 7.3 Scaling Athletic Embodiment



Figure 7-2: National headquarters of Sports Institute, Lima

*“Doors now closing. Next station: National Stadium.”*

For those traveling the *via expresa* on the *metropolitano*, it rises and swells gradually on the horizon, a sports cerebrum reflecting coastal light off its metallic skull. In Lima, smog obscures eastern foothills that climb to distant heights, and peeking from the cramped bus it seems impossible that the mountains housing the center in Cusco could really be there, their obscured vastness the exact opposite of the *metropolitano*, where cramped bodies jostle to grasp suspended rebar while glasses and windows fog up. Shouting matches often erupt between passengers elbowing one another recklessly in mad dashes to get off and on board the overcrowded transport, like basketballers boxing each other out in the paint, the athleticism of an urban commute entirely unlike the Andean heights through which Huayra commuted as a child.

After enduring a marathon of administrative meetings—alongside other athletes who now board shuttles headed back to the *Villa Deportiva Nacional* in *San Luis*—Huayra passes through the stadium’s security check point on her way to the *metropolitano* bus station beside the venue. Activities like the meetings between Huayra and her administrators are relegated to the periphery of the enclosure, to the circuit of offices that encase the venue and face outwards through one-way-glass windows in the northern and southern lobes of the stadium, where circulate ordinary athletes handling paperwork, stamping permission slips, manning phones, and passing gossip. Only concrete walls separate the oxfords that amble through office hallways and the cleats that arrive to the track, but they live worlds apart.

Huayra has extended family in Lima, though her coaches are hesitant to let her wander. They don’t want her to tire her legs, like she is doing now while passing each installation of the Sports Institute’s *Top Peru Lima 2019* campaign, the monoliths distributed around the stadium, each with a future Pan-American medal contender’s image plastered upon it, a concrete gallery to inspire pedestrians and ambitious athletes passing by. Huayra’s coaches weren’t thrilled about

her meetings with the administrators either, complaining among themselves that such things encourage “level jumping” (*saltar niveles*) and challenge transparency, wishing instead that athletes who felt compelled to vent to admin directly could divulge their issues face-to-face with the coaches themselves.

Though she has a vague idea of which direction the ocean is, Huayra cannot navigate towards any particular neighborhood in Lima, nor walk the streets without help. It was the same in Cusco when she arrived, she explains, but then, and still now, once she gets out of the city and sees the hills she knows roughly where she is. She can get anywhere in the countryside surrounding her home by following the hills. “*I miss the countryside,*” she says, “*the cohabitation with family. But not the lifestyle of the countryside*<sup>11</sup>.” Although some of her peers fondly remember childhood labor in the fields, Huayra does not pine to return, instead smiling when she reflects upon her arrival to Cusco. “*I said some day I’m going to leave this place. It’s a sacrifice to be there. When I arrived I was happy. Happy because I was no longer going to be cleaning, cooking, or herding my cows*<sup>12</sup>.”

Her extended family now lives in *Rimac*, generally regarded as a bad area, and after traveling on her own in the bus to *Estación Parque del Trabajo*, she will de-board and meet her cousin before the two journey into the neighborhood together. For months the *Rimac* river that cuts Lima in two from east to west has been overflowing with the runoff of flash floods gripping the northern coast, all downstream rivers now turgid with rushing brown froth. Neighborhood residents are fighting with pots and pans over water in the public fountains, throwing blows in a struggle to carry back home the means to shower and cook. The same means Huayra celebrates now, the privileges of living in the center in Cusco.



The rain causing the flooding is not unlike the rain that soaked her daily as a child. *“You’re in the house, and the very countryside, it’s like, the rain soaks you and you don’t change, so you stay soaked until you dry. It was always rain. To go to school, rain<sup>13</sup>.”* Huayra escaped the rain, finding refuge in the training compound, her path secured so long as she adhered to protocol. *“Few are the kids who have the force to lift themselves up and say: I’m going to continue. That’s what happens with some talents, they lose the opportunity<sup>14</sup>,”* she says, of the many athletes who pass through the stadium, or through the center in Cusco, and burn out, opt out, slide down the wrong side of a gamble on their talent. *“I always say I ought to go further beyond, not get stuck<sup>15</sup>,”* she adds. In Lima, for so many stranded in the havoc, the path is now uncertain, and for bodies politic aspiring to lift themselves up, a debate is brewing.



On her perambulations from mountain heights to coastal shores, Huayra carries a maxim. She can articulate it, this imperative to “go further beyond,” and can reflect upon “opportunities lost” by peers who have not adhered to it like she has. Huayra—an athlete who trains in a regional compound that supplements its income by renting out some of the facilities to everyday civilians on a daily basis, for whom collisions on the track with those paying amateurs during open hours in the late afternoon are not uncommon, who is occasionally instructed to lower her shoulder by coaches fed up with making way for those clueless civilians day-dreaming in the innermost lanes, who sends these bumbling joggers tumbling to the asphalt after wandering into and catching her full momentum in the heat of a timed trial—has taken to her training in a way so many others have not.

In Cusco's Performance Center much is still lacking, though according to coaches and staff the situation has gotten decidedly better than the early years, when "*an athlete had to pay their way if they wanted to compete in Lima, and had no training, and went by bus*<sup>16</sup>," Julio reminisces. Even today, "*they lack many things in order to be able to perform maximally*<sup>17</sup>," he says, including funding for improvements to the infrastructure, faster turnaround for medical testing, and replacements for worn cleats and ripped vests. Yet more than infrastructural repairs, ideological work is the principal interest of coaches in the center and throughout the country, who lament the absence of a national "sports ideology" (*ideologia deportiva*), that sport—and track-and-field in particular—appears for many people as "a cost" (*un gasto*) rather than "*the expression of the cultural development of a country*<sup>18</sup>," and feel responsible for socializing the public to Peru's wider sports accomplishments.

Peru's 2018 appearance at the FIFA World Cup in Russia, their first birth secured in thirty-six years<sup>19</sup>, proved to be one such moment, an opportunity for all to coalesce around a sport that had brought them to the global arena. During the preliminary round the streets of Lima were deserted, and the National Stadium filled to capacity for a watch party where citizens united to support their team. But Peru's performance was dismal, paling in comparison to the track-and-field triumphs of the Peruvian delegation at the eleventh South American Games' track-and-field championships in *Chochabamba*, Bolivia, which achieved historic medal counts and set new South American records at precisely the same time the celebrated *blanquiroja* was losing in back-to-back, widely viewed matches in Moscow. Of these historic track-and-field accomplishments in the Andes little was said beyond the ambit of the Sports Institute and by anyone other than those already in the orbit of the International Association of Athletics Federations. "*We are betting on something that isn't going any further*<sup>20</sup>," the technical director

in Cusco would often say, shaking his head while eying from the height of his office the soccer academy that butts against the perimeter fence on the north side of the track.

The irony of aspiring to develop and showcase talent for a nation that looks the other way, especially to the fruitless travails of a national soccer team powered more by propaganda and publicity than success, was referred to by many in the Sports Institute—jokingly though certainly with a tinge of pain—as “our passion, our illusion” (*nuestra pasión, nuestra ilusión*). The catch phrase bespeaks fears of potential not maximized, of mismanaged investments in sporting endeavors that pay no dividends. Such fears came to be explicitly articulated in the years before the Pan-American Games came to fruition in Lima, when horrendous flooding gripped the Pacific coast of South America and caused widespread devastation in Peru. By March 2017, floods and mudslides from Piura to Lima had killed and injured hundreds, forced millions of students out of school, and left hundreds of thousands without clean water. In Lima, antsy customers flocked to and cleaned out grocery and corner stores of bottled water, while others mobilized to assuage the devastation. Water usage awareness campaigns took hold in the city, volunteerism skyrocketed as cadres of earnest helpers moved in solidarity throughout affected areas (*El Comercio* March 20th, 2017), and donations from abroad and within Peru swelled to meet the tide (OCHA Summary Situation Report #5, 2017). A grassroots movement tried to buoy those inundated by the crisis.

The crisis spilled out, however, and caused a communicative rupture that, in efforts to reseal it, generated a new ethicalized attention to sport. Amid the ecological chaos, competing political factions began debating explicitly the place of sport in the nation. Disagreements erupted over the importance of the coming Pan-American Games and, more pointedly, about the portion of Peru’s budget tied up in infrastructural and professional sports development. Members

of the *American Popular Revolutionary Alliance*<sup>21</sup> minority party, led by congressman Javier Velásquez Quesquén, sought to overturn a pair of legislative decrees<sup>22</sup> that had written the Games into Peruvian law, enabling the allocation of investments in sports infrastructure throughout the country. In lockstep, Roque Benavides—president of the *The National Confederation of Private Business Institutions*<sup>23</sup>—demanded that funds apportioned for the games be redirected to disaster relief, and that the hosting rights to the event be ceded entirely. Claiming that Peru’s recent refusal to host the 2017 Dakar motocross rally provided a precedent for repeating the action, Benavides insisted: “*I believe we ought to orient all the resource that could be invested in the Pan-American games in order to reconstruct the northern area*<sup>24</sup>,” calling the reinvestment “*an opportunity*” for appropriate spending at the national level.

Members of the party of then-president Pablo Pedro Kuzcynski responded that a reallocation of funds and resignation from the competition would be a national embarrassment in the eyes of the sporting world and a failure to support the many Sports Institute athletes who had been preparing for years to represent the nation in the coming competition. “*Peru has agreed to be host for the Pan American Games in a competition where we won over other countries*<sup>25</sup>,” Kuzcynski pleaded; “*it would truly be a tragedy to be unable to comply.*” Competing claims to modernity recapitulated, for like athletes evaluating the trampoline of the training center, the Peruvian government fragmented and began debating a good path forward. Would it be towards global competition, or towards reconstruction to the exclusion of sport? The question, succinctly phrased by Idalberto, was: “*will the Pan-American Games be the great take-off of Peruvian Sport, or will they be the debacle of Peruvian sport*<sup>26</sup>?”

In the midst of congressional scandal, the Sports Institute launched a multi-pronged social-media effort to muster pro-sports spirit across the country, arranging a series of radio

broadcasts deployed in tandem with news blasts of pro-Games discourses, as well as a video-series of athletes explaining what it means to participate in the Games and what it would mean were Peru to lose them. With tens of thousands of views and hundreds of comments, the Institute's corner piece, a short video disseminated across social media platforms in March 2017 titled "*What Would Happen if We Lost the Pan-American Games Lima 2019<sup>27</sup>?*" melded brief interviews with professional athletes. Some were captured post-competition, others with athletes pulled aside, fatigued and glistening between their training repetitions, to solicit their views on the schism organizing the highest chambers of Peruvian political authority. Congealing across the vignettes were common themes: of embarrassment in the eyes of the global public as "other countries begin to see Peru for breaking a promise<sup>28</sup>"; of frustration among athletes "killing themselves daily in training" (*nos matamos entrenando todos los días*), who would "sacrifice" and "pledge themselves" (*comprometerse*) to a competition just to be "rejected at home" (*se rehusa aquí en la casa*) at precisely the moment they were motivated to "carry Peru forward and obtain the greatest quantity of medals possible<sup>29</sup>."

The official narrative mustered both in congress and across social-media campaigns modeled 'us / you' factions framed in possibly agonistic relation. Kuzcynski's invocation of a moment in which "we won over other countries" addressed a public included referentially in a first person plural inclusive pronoun, a public interpellated to live up to the responsibility of winning a competition it had already participated in *i.e.*, to secure the hosting rights. In contradistinction, athletes immersed in a material surround of state-sponsored sports facilities—their professional domain, beyond the access of everyday civilians—mustered an exclusionary 'we' in their messaging, framing themselves as a group who would die to accomplish great things for a home that might "reject" them.



Figure 7-3: Athlete vignettes in promotional material.

(Source: “What Would Happen if We Lost the Pan-American Games Lima 2019,” IPD 2017)

In tightly framed vignettes viewers were forced into intimate, dyadic contact with the youth, who popped into resolution against a blurred background to converse. Responding already to a pair part that no visible third party had voiced, athletes left viewers to infer that they themselves had asked the question at hand. Why would the question even be relevant, and why would the answer be relevant if not for the fact that the viewer—we—were precipitating the problem? The viewer was conversationally forced to take a stance vis-a-vis the athlete’s exertion and sacrifice, the interactional affordance of a communication technology which, via conversational sequencing, created the conditions for construal *qua* ethical deliberation.



Figure 7-4: Pan-American Games 2019 slogans and advertisements are placed throughout Lima in the lead-up to the competition

(Source: Olympics.com)

‘We,’ a first-person plural pronoun in Spanish, is a shifter indexical of a group to which any addressee’s inclusion remains murky without reference to context. The Sports Institute’s social media campaigns thus manufactured a virtual space for the general public to interactionally re-align with the athletes it had, potentially, shunned. “Both things can be carried forward<sup>30</sup>, ” said the athletes, the promise of a sporting future of Peru and the promise of disaster relief for the flooding. Across Lima were plastered banners, flyers, and flags all advertising the games with the official Pan-American Games 2019 slogan “We all play” (“*Jugamos todos*”) transforming everyday mobility throughout the metro area into a ceaseless encounter with a national community, one with a promise to uphold to itself and the super citizens who would represent it. Indeed, a “promise” (*compromiso*) to be kept became a recurring theme in the Sports Institute’s media technologies, and by July 2017 more than one hundred “top” Peruvian athletes, “*the elite of Peruvian sport*” and selected by the Institute as “*those called to vie for medals for our country in the grand event we are going to organize*<sup>31</sup>” (IPD 2017 p.3), were assembling with president Kuczynski to pledge their participation in the games. Bolstering these pledges, the Sports Institute promised to them a percentage increase in the national PAD stipend. With written signatures on leather bound papers and corresponding remuneration, ‘*Top Peru Lima 2019*’ athletes and their authorities infixed in graphic artifacts a political and embodied scaling: if top athletes were promising their will power and embodied gifts unto the nation, the nation, in turn, was duly expected to promise itself unto both its athletes and to the wider world of elite sport to which those athletes aspired. Each action in the series thus ratcheted up the Institute’s delivery on its promise to forge the future while inviting the nation to reflect on its parallel duties.

In this scalar lamination were juxtaposed two gambles: an athlete’s bet that the fruit of their labor will warrant the sacrifice, and a nation’s bet that the outcome of their competition will

warrant the cost of its investment. As Idalberto puts it, this investment would generate a split future out of which two principal paths might diverge:

*“If the president, or congress, comes and says: “we invested I don’t know how many hundred of millions, we won three medals, so? What is our sport? This is our sport at the Pan-American level?” If it occurs to someone that everything that was done during 2019 was an expense, and that infrastructure upon infrastructure will remain and that the majority won’t make up anything, they are going to say “well, let’s remodel and make hotels<sup>32</sup>.”*

If sacrifice, moving away from home, and giving up work to pursue the medal led to an underwhelming performance, might athletes be left seeing their training facilities transformed into hotels? Might the viewing public, who pay for tickets to opening and closing ceremonies, for entrance to witness the competitions, be left unsatisfied? Would it all be for naught? Athletes in Cusco confronted the same series of questions.

#### **7.4 Cultivating the Will to Weather Pain**



*Figure 7-5: Massage therapy on the track in Cusco*



Months after dodging flood waters in Lima after the national championship, Huayra has returned to Cusco. In her description of the passage of time since her arrival from the coast, she arcs her hand up and over an invisible crest before descending to rest the hand below, and out of this curved bottom her hand swoops upwards once more, the quick succession of manual sine waves a metaphoric gesture for the waxing and waning of her energy. Huayra has been battling cycles of demotivation. “*Everything the same routine,*” she explains. “*I get tired, and say: why do I keep running<sup>33</sup>?*” Between twice daily training, high-to-low altitude competition circuits, and University classes bent to accommodate her athletic scheduling—the interactional labor of convincing her professors to be lenient and understanding of her situation no small task—Huayra brushes with fatigue constantly, not only on the track but in most waking moments.

Rushing from the compound in the early morning to an academic campus elsewhere in the city, then rushing back for afternoon training while meeting daily caloric requirements, thereby curtailing virtually every opportunity to build a social network outside of her athletic endeavors, is, as she puts it, a “sacrifice” (*sacrificio*), constant and engulfing. Even her competition successes no longer stimulate her the way they did in the past, the highs of her wins now markedly less potent rewards for perpetuating the routine.

*“When I was at the national championship, because I was first place, after that I had no desire to train. I felt I had reached my peak. My world went crumbling downwards. And I went to ODESUR<sup>34</sup> and I won, and worse, downwards. I didn’t go to the Lima Cup, and coach Idalberto tells me “there’s a girl who ran two seconds better than you.” There yes, I awoke<sup>35</sup>.”*

Years into her athletic residence in the compound, Huayra feels reinvigorated motivation only after learning of someone doing better numbers than she has, attuned solely to the seconds that

separate her and her closest competitors, no longer to the medals hung around her neck on trips to territories home and abroad.

Like Huayra, every athlete in the performance center will attest that training tires. Of course, it tires the body. Chronic joint pain, shin splints, plantar fasciitis, the pain of scraping a fold of skin clean off a shin on the edge of a hurdle; joints, bones, and muscles all hurt in the relentless pursuit of improved technique. Assembled around massage tables with the physical therapists beside the track, athletes jokingly commiserate about how simple movements like sitting down at the dining hall table or getting out of bed in the early morning become herculean feats after running dozens of kilometers or performing hundreds of crunches. But if athletes are forged in the throes of training, so-called cowards are exposed there too, and organizing the vocal flurries of technical instruction on the track is a discourse on the pain of endurance running. “If you don’t like pain,” says the technical director, “forget it” (*si no te gusta el dolor, olvidate*). Endurance running is a sports modality that exposes cowards, who “*don’t like to demand too much of themselves,*” who “*prefer to be doing other things, not training*”<sup>36</sup>.

Coaches and administrators demand that athletes be recipients not only of coaching language but also of the ethos of training, even when that ethos exacts its toll on the training organism. Whereas sensitivity to language and technical input is crucial in the estimation of coaches, sensitivity to pain is abhorred. Athletes are in the tricky position of having to perform as demanded but conveying fatigue as their reason for failure if and when they do fail<sup>37</sup>, by ambling on sore legs, grunting and coughing with heads down, or spitting between heavy breaths. Taken in aggregate, these embodied behaviors congeal into stereotypical images: athletes sitting with bent knees and hands on the ground are said to partake in “lazy crab walking” (*cangrejera*), and those who complain of nagging aches invite caustic jeers that they are “wusses in the end”

(*maricones al final*). When athletes lay splayed on the lawn gasping, steam rising from sweat that pours down hot limbs drained of glycogen, coaches demand they “knock off the foolery” (*déjate de chistes*) with paternalistic declarations that “there is more work to do” (*hay que seguir trabajando*). Faces scrunched in anguish between drills and repetitions can invite sharp rebuke e.g., “let’s go dude, you’ve still got that sad look on your face?!” (*dale viejo que todavía te quedaste con la cara de lastima esa*).

Coaches often use internal tensions as pedagogical tools, creating competitive circumstances that “push” (*empujar*) leaders and “pull” (*jalar*) followers, something like a zone of proximal embodied development. These interpersonal dyads are ideal for self-cultivating athletes who learn to hold themselves accountable when not under supervision, both in training sessions and when on their own recreationally. “You see that you could make an effort?” (*ves que si podías hacer un esfuerzito*), coaches ask upon concluding demanding routines. “It’s only a matter of emerging with willingness” (*es salir con disposición nada más es*), they say, offering high fives and vigorous nods of approval. As coaches and trainers constantly monitor their athlete’s willingness to train, they hopscotch from playful antagonizing to more caustic disapproval. They commonly address their athletes during training sessions after impressive bouts, saying “you see? When you want to run hard, you run hard” (*ves cuando ustedes quieren correr duro corren duro*), holding their athletes accountable for refraining from exertion.

The laborious process creates cycles of pleasure and despair, of the highs of accomplishment and the valleys of unrewarded toiling. In Huayra’s estimation, most athletes struggle to habituate to this motivational tempo. As she puts it, there is always “demotivation” (*desmotivacion*), and “*the majority does not master that. There is a phase like this and they can’t lift themselves up*<sup>38</sup>.” Her coaches concur, attributing to novice athletes with impressive entry

marks a decision to withdraw from the depths of training upon realizing the nature of the process: “*they enter with a level like that, but when they see the reality of what an elite level training program is, they can’t sustain the training*<sup>39</sup>.” This ethnometapragmatics of movement iconically motivates fatigue as cowardly, ethicalizing behavior and attributing a will to an athlete’s interior, “the interior force you ought to raise” (*la fuerza interior que debes levantar*) as Huayra calls it. Off the track, the process is celebrated as an ascetic dedication, the pairing of worldly privation with incremental gain, so that athletes lift themselves up for a goal.

Huayra, who has learned to recapitulate the ethical evaluations of athletic training, meshes with the coaching staff, buttressing folk theories of the intersection of will and socioeconomic mobility, of rural kids who come for “*a scholarship, access to education, access to food, access to a technical team*<sup>40</sup>,” that is, the wrong reasons, and so are condemned to never achieve the way that is expected of them. According to Tomas, insofar as on countryside campaigns—the training center’s principal recruitment modality—residence in the center “*was sold as a trampoline*<sup>41</sup>,” athletes cannot suture the subjectivities of countryside mobility and sporting success in every case (or even in most cases). The communication breakdown conditions an athlete’s trajectory from the moment of their arrival:

*“In the high school where they were before they didn’t like sport, but nonetheless they had the talent. As they saw the possibility— “they’re going to give for something I’m good at”—they saw it as the trampoline effect, but when they arrived to the CAR, the situation was completely different, because it was not a boarding school, but rather a training center*<sup>42</sup>. ”

Though the center convenes athletic talent and technical expertise, the components are not articulated—in the sense of a joint—with any ideological glue, any passion for sport *per se*.

Cusco's political ecology thus sets up the regional sports program's perduring frustration, the recruitment of talent with sociological trouble built into it.

Consider, then, that Huayra, much like the coaching staff who conversationally tease apart their athletes' conditions from their characterological attributes (see chapter one), has learned to verbally disentangle the purported gift of sports talent from the disciplinarian troubles of a habitualization routine, learned to separate into social types the "*kids that arrive here with talent and it was that they sought other things, for them training was not their objective*<sup>43</sup>" from the "*kids that want to be here, but possibly don't have any talent*<sup>44</sup>." Consider also that this interiorized 'will' to train, which Huayra locates in a "head that must change" (*la cabeza que tiene que cambiar*) to confront the difficulties of the athletic career, recapitulates an administrative demand for the externalization of will in daily life, "*that the kids who come do so to contribute*<sup>45</sup>" as the director puts it; that they come to add to the sporting accomplishments of the center, its medal count and competition success. Training is therefore as much about broadcasting ethical subjectivity as it is refining movement patterns and achieving technical progress, as much about foregrounding sporting aspirations as responding to cues. For if you do not "advance" (*avanzar*), and worse yet if "you are not seen with any intention of wanting to improve" (*no se te ve con ninguna intención de querer mejorar*), a kick out the door may await. Habituation, as framed from the point of view of the coaches, confronts an organizing Indigenous worldview as a matter of ethical inhabitation: can you endure the demands to become greater? Can you overcome your negativity, your caloric restrictions, prohibitions on your leaving the center without permissions, regulations prohibiting center-internal amorous<sup>46</sup> activity, and heed the call?

Returning full circle, any spirit of sport acquired unknowingly in the countryside does not come with a means of articulation, and athletes who pursue a place in the center but not for sport itself are treated as ticking time bombs. The physical potential that beckons scouts contains within itself the seed of its own undoing: *“when they really realize what they are doing they say: this sacrifice is not for me. I am not made for this suffering, for this day-to-day, of so much effort and such will that must be exercised. Not everyone is made of that strong a constitution<sup>47</sup>.”* Being seen with the intention of wanting to improve is thus of the utmost importance, and athletes struggle to externalize that want. Juxtaposed are two narrative frames within which are grouped physical travails: coaches call it ethical self cultivation, the will to sacrifice and “fight for the medal” (*luchar por la medalla*); athletes call it “pure routine,” (*pura rutina*) and see a looming fork in the road, where training and study will become unmanageable as simultaneous pursuits. Privation—of social life, of leisure, of recreation—puts pressure on the training system, and when that pressure builds, the outcome can be disastrous.

### **7.5 Ethical Infraction as Affordance for Re-scaling the Indigenous Body**

The evening before the infraction a small group assembled in the commons around fake cash and dice. Mixing with the sounds of monopoly<sup>48</sup> board games were the clacks of hollow plastic traveling back and forth against wooden racquets, the ping-pong balls sometimes missing the surface of the table entirely and dribbling down the dormitory hallways beyond. In the down time on a Friday evening, professional athletes were children at their play before innocence was lost. Twenty-four hours after a small group was discovered with a small quantity of alcohol in the training center’s female dormitory, bureaucrats in the regional Sports Institute office reported the infraction to the national headquarters. Drinking as an employee of the Sports Institute, be it

athletes in the dormitories or administrators in their offices, is a codified “disciplinary infraction” (IPD 2018 p.37), one defined in a tripartite classification<sup>49</sup> as “extremely serious” (*muy grave*) among a longer list of official prohibitions (*Reglamento Interno del Trabajador del IPD 2017*), and generally treated with a zero-tolerance policy in state-sponsored installations throughout the country. In one night, an interactional charge of training life that imbues movements and routines with ethical significance brushed against a political field of official rules and regulations administered from afar by the Sports Institute.

Staff joined with high-ranking regional bureaucrats at the regional offices of the Sports Institute to deliberate punitive action. The ensuing interrogations were a communicative pressure cooker: athletes were first sequestered in a holding room with no telecommunications, then questioned individually, implored to speak “with sincerity” (*con sinceridad*) about who had acquired what in order to not “harm themselves” (*perjudicarse*), and reminded that in the center “everything comes to be known” (*todo se llega a enterrar*). Distributed across the room were bureaucrats positioned behind the presidential desk, training center staff in front of it, and athletes occupying a chair with its back to the far wall, the bureaucrats and staff to either side of this hot seat.

Although athletes were spatially positioned as the communicative centers of attention, pre-interrogation deliberations had already generated tensions among their examiners. Training center staff members had advocated for individualized sanctions but met resistance from bureaucrats for whom “the norm makes no exceptions” (*la norma no hace excepciones*), and for whom individualized punishments would elicit complaints of favoritism. A conversational tug-of-war ensued, as each faction vied to frame the misbehaviors. Bureaucrats veered sharply towards invocations of “prohibition” (*prohibición*) and of adherence to “internal regulations”

(*reglamento interno*), asking each of the athletes if they had been given a hard copy of the center’s rules while repeating depersonalized imperatives that, at least, they be given one now. The training center staff diverged, albeit initially, instead invoking “correct” (*correcto*) behavior, despite adolescent curiosities, while imploring the athletes to recognize that their misbehavior was as painful for the staff; “we all kill ourselves upon seeing this,” (*nos matamos todos al ver esto*) they explained.

But the bureaucrats seized the conversational reigns, leading the proceedings despite not knowing the athletes personally. Complicating matters, they regularly exited the room to field phone calls from the national office, then returned to the stream of talk to retake control, launching questions that had been asked in their vocal absence. Dyadic exchanges between single bureaucrats and single athletes<sup>50</sup> thus cast the training center staff as subordinated audience members, who sat uncomfortably to witness those they were tasked with cultivating air grievances, albeit delicately at first:

|    |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>¿Como te sientes en el CEAR? ¿Te sientes comodo? ¿Incomodo? ¿Te gusta? ¿No te gusta? ¿Como te sientes?</i><br>“How do you feel in the CEAR? Do you feel comfortable? Uncomfortable? Do you like it? Do you dislike it? How do you feel?”                                                                                                                |
| 2. | Athlete1    | <i>En el CAR me siento cómodo. Hay algunas cosas que, más que todo es las salidas, Tenemos que estar anotándonos hasta para el jardín tenemos que anotarnos.</i><br>“I feel comfortable in the CAR. There are some things that, more than anything it’s the exits. We have to be registering ourselves even for the garden we have to register ourselves.” |
| 3. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>¿Eso te molesta?</i><br>“That bothers you?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4. | Athlete1    | <i>Un poco ilógico, hasta el jardín anotarnos.</i><br>“A bit illogical, to register ourselves even for the garden.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 5. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>¿Sabias que esta institución es del estado?</i><br>“Did you know that this is a state institution?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 6. | Athlete1    | <i>Si.</i><br>“Yes.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 7. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>¿Que el trabajador siendo coordinador regional, los profesores siendo profesionales, tenían que sacar una papeleta de salida si querían ir para afuera? Ustedes no tienen</i>                                                                                                                                                                           |



|     |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     |             | <i>porque incomodarse porque son reglamentos y normas y leyes del estado.</i><br>“That the working being a regional coordinator, the coaches being professional, had to fill out an exit ballot if they want to go outside? You all have no reason to feel uncomfortable because they are regulations and norms and laws of the state.” |
| 8.  | Athlete1    | <i>Si eso tenemos claro, pero los chicos nos sentimos incómodos estar allí adentro.</i><br>“Yes we have that clear, but we kids feel uncomfortable being inside there.”                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9.  | Bureaucrat2 | <i>¿Entonces te gustaría irte?</i><br>“So you’d like to leave?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10. | Athlete1    | <i>No, o sea, no, me refiero a que un tipo de paseo, desestresarme un poco más.</i><br>“No, I mean, no, I’m referring to, like, a kind of stroll, to de-stress myself a little more.”                                                                                                                                                   |

Alluding to contractual language in the *reglamento* and summoning athletes to expound on their familiarity with the formalities of state-sponsored sport [5, 7], bureaucrats elicited register competence. Athletes, in turn, fell back on self-ascriptions of youthful error, “for having the curiosity to do these things” (*por tener la curiosidad de hacer estas cosas*) or of “perhaps getting caught up in the moment” (*quizás me deje llevar por el momento*). Asking of each athlete whether they had signed any pledge upon entering the center, the bureaucrats positioned an authoritative text in the center of the participation framework, and thereby implicated the training center staff for failing to hold athletes accountable to these performative artifacts. The issue was, in essence, a breach of contract.

These were difficult interactional mechanics for the staff members, who were cast in twin roles: as pedagogues for their rosters, and as state authorities beside other bureaucrats. In the same breath they might alienate their athletes and the bureaucrats with whom they are required to collaborate. Jostling over the frame, bureaucrats and staff members seemed to address each other as much as the athletes by way of their questioning. The staff reproduced the bureaucrats’ inquiries, falling in line by reproducing allusions to “internal regulations” (*reglamento interno*):

|    |       |                                                                                                                                                          |
|----|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Tomas | <i>Atleta1, ¿tu entrenador te ha informado del reglamento que tiene el CAR?</i><br>“Athlete1, your coach has informed you of the regulation in the CAR?” |
|----|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|    |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. | Athlete1 | <i>Si</i><br>“Yes.”                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 3. | Tomas    | <i>Y obviamente tu como deportista nacional que representas al Peru y todo tu sabes que esto esta prohibido.</i><br>“And obviously you as a national athlete who represents Peru and all, you know that this is prohibited?” |
| 4. | Athlete1 | <i>Si.</i><br>“Yes.”                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5. | Tomas    | <i>Porque no dijiste que no entonces, si tu sabes de todo esto.=</i><br>“Why didn’t you say ‘no’ then, if you knew about all this?”                                                                                          |
| 6. | Rene     | <i>=No te has puesto a pensar en el reglamento?</i><br>“You haven’t stopped to think about the regulations?”                                                                                                                 |
| 7. | Athlete1 | <i>Como dije es que estábamos en este entonces, es que estamos en esa etapa [todos somos jóvenes.</i><br>“Like I said, it’s that we were in that moment, it’s that were en that phase, we’re all youngsters.”                |
| 8. | Michael  | <i>[Es que no estas en tu casa.</i><br>“It’s that you’re not in your house.”                                                                                                                                                 |

Yet as the examination progressed, athletes seemed less the focus of the trial and more the vocal extensions of their staff, who insisted vicariously on their appropriate dissemination of regulatory information [1,3,6]. Perhaps implicitly on trial for adherence to protocol and submission to authority, the staff’s questions were a triangulated defense: they responded to bureaucrats via the answers of the athletes, their first pair parts induced answers to clarify the preceding lines of questioning in a shadow conversation regarding the athletes’ behavior. While athletes continued to narrativize their fault as the outcome of adolescent tendencies [7], the staff aligned with the bureaucrats and refused their reasoning [8], thereby affirming the appropriate execution of their official duties. In each exchange, staff took double stances, aligning against their athletes vis-a-vis the (mis)behaviors, aligning towards the bureaucrats vis-a-vis the athletes.

Between two camps, with their backs to the physical and proverbial wall, some athletes leveraged the interactional tensions between the administrators to report on their caretakers, in some moments inverting the trial. The bureaucrats’ questions and statements threatened to undercut the authority of the training center staff, opening a window for athletes to respond

directly to an superordinate layer and regroup with the higher ranking authority. Taken to task for referring to a security guard by their first name, one athlete tried, at first in vain, to shift blame:

|    |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>Por que le tratas de Gregorio, que le dices Gregorio Gregorio. A mis compañeros de trabajo acá nos tratamos de señores. Ustedes son becarios son como los hijos. Ellos son como los papas. Hay jerarquías acá no hay que confundir</i><br>“Why do you refer to him as ‘Gregorio’? You tell him ‘Gregorio’ ‘Gregorio’. To my work colleagues, here we refer to each other as mister/misses. You all are all alums, you’re like the children. They are like the parents. There are hierarchies here, there is no reason to be confused.” |
| 2. | Athlete2    | <i>Son como los papas?</i><br>“‘They are like the parents?’”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>Claro, son como los padres.</i><br>“Right, they are like the parents.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4. | Athlete2    | <i>Le puedo preguntar algo? Si son como los papas, usted en algún momento tuvo hijos hijas que cometieran el mismo error que nosotros, como los trató.</i><br>“Can I ask you something? If they are like the parents? You, at some moment had sons, daughters that committed the same error as we did, how did you treat them?”                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 5. | Bureaucrat1 | <i>Si tengo dos hijos varones gracias a dios y gracias a dios nunca han cometido este tipo de errores. Porque les hemos conducido bien</i><br>“‘Yes I have to sons, thanks to God, and thanks to God they have never committed this type of error. Because we have conducted them well.’”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 6. | Athlete2    | <i>Entonces disculpa</i><br>“‘Well, forgive me.’”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

As the laminate roles of the staff members came disentangled [1], athletes attributed incongruity to the personnel in the center. Prying open a space between state language and kin relations, Athlete2 ascribed an ethical failure to their staff:

*“They say we are family. That they are like our parents. It’s not like this. The treatment is not as if someone were your parent here. The only person that I will see as my father, the only person will be my trainer, the others no<sup>51</sup>.”*

The pressurized communication environment began to backfire as a strategy, as athletes used their platform to air grievances, using the language of the staff against them. The interrogation was an opportunity, in effect, for athletes, staff members, and bureaucrats to position themselves

interactionally to competing interests, and through their diverse footings all see-sawed back and forth over the nature of the misbehaviors. The narrated event quickly became a springboard to other lines of debate, and in perhaps a critical misstep, bureaucrats provided an avenue for the staff members to recapture control of the conversation.

Frustrated by difficulties adjusting their monthly stipend after winning a medal that bumped them into a higher earnings bracket, one athlete had published a lengthy description of their trouble on social media platforms before the meeting, tagging several authority figures in the Sports Institute and Peru’s track-and-field federation. Upset with the speech—now published on channels out of the direct control of the Institute—the bureaucrats denounced the action, while the athlete doubled down on the sentiment: “*there are athletes who earn more than me with fewer results*<sup>52</sup>,” they protested. Staff members took the grievance as an opportunity to air their own concerns:

|    |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Daniel      | <i>Tu te has puesto a pensar que ese mensaje les cae como una llamada de atención a muchos de la personal de la federación, del IPD, a eso me refiero.</i><br>“Have you stopped to think that that message might seem a call for attention to many of the personnel of the federation, of the Sports Institute? That’s what I refer to.”                                                                                         |
| 2. | Athlete3    | <i>Es que uno se cansa de tanto estar insistiendo doctor.</i><br>“It’s that one tires of insisting so much doctor.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 3. | Daniel      | <i>Pero si ellos son la cabeza y leen eso, tu crees que puede haber represalias frente a ti?</i><br>“But if they are the head and they read that, do you believe there may be retaliations upon you?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 4. | Athlete3    | <i>No se que instancias son, si yo tengo que hacerlo o quien, pero solamente quería llamar la atención.</i><br>I don’t know which authorities they are, if I have to do it or who, but I only wanted to call attention.”                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 5. | Daniel      | <i>Nadie dice que no tienes razón.</i><br>“No one is saying you aren’t right.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6. | Bureaucrat2 | <i>¿Por que acá no has usado? porque si hubieras pasado por acá les hubiera mandado urgente inclusive subrayado que solicito se te de lo que te corresponde, y acá nunca ha llegado un documento.</i><br>“Why haven’t you utilized here? Because if you had passed through here I would have urgently sent to them, even underlined, that I solicit what corresponds to you is given to you, and a document never arrived here.” |

|    |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7. | Athlete3 | <i>Si profesor efectivamente pero se supone que las instancias, al comité de la federación tenemos que hacer a ellos, y la federación avala al IPD, por esa instancia yo he observado</i><br>“Yes professor, in effect, but supposedly we have to make petitions to the committee of the federation, and the federation endorses the IPD, I have adhered to that petition.” |
|----|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

On the one hand, Athlete3 and Daniel deliberate the medium of publication, how the athlete exposes themselves with a “call for attention” that might irk federation and Institute personnel. On the other, the two collaboratively figure athletes in contradistinction to an institutional “head” (*cabeza*), one with the resources and perhaps the will to “retaliate” (*represalia*) against those who would dare to speak out. The bureaucrats were, thus, left suspended: to which part of the leviathan do they pertain, the head or the extremities? The capital or the provinces?

Signaling a willingness to have helped, one bureaucrat stipulated appropriate communicative channels for handling such problems, and expressed their disposition to facilitate, even demand, proper resolution to the issue. Yet the athlete’s knowledge of the formal system [7] challenged the bureaucrat’s revisionist promise, triggering a cascade of grievances from staff regarding the state of sport in Peru:

|    |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Rene         | <i>A mi sí me da cólera. Me da cólera que atletas que se han retirado siguen recibiendo. Y hay una falencia bien grave=</i><br>“‘It really enrages me. It enrages me that athletes who have retired keep receiving. And there is a severe shortcoming-” |
| 2. | Bureaucrat 1 | <i>=Indigna eso no=</i><br>“‘That angers, doesn’t it?”                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 3. | Rene         | <i>=Indigna eso, y hay una falencia bien grave, y lo que ha manifestado en este es una cosa cierta=</i><br>“‘That angers. And there is a very severe shortcoming, and what has been manifested in this is something true-”                              |
| 4. | Bureaucrat 1 | <i>=Es cierto=</i><br>“‘It’s true.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5. | Rene         | <i>=Es cierto, entonces yo tal vez [yo acaso</i><br>“‘It’s true. So I, maybe, I perhaps-”                                                                                                                                                               |
| 6. | Bureaucrat 2 | <i>[pero no es el medio=</i><br>“‘But it isn’t the medium.”                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|     |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.  | Rene         | <i>=Si si si, yo entiendo eso, no es el medio, pero lamentablemente esa falencia, esta metido allí en la federación, no se quien realmente son las personas [ que</i><br>“ <i>Yes yes yes, I understand that, it isn’t the medium, but lamentably this shortcoming, is stuck there in the federation, I don’t know who really-</i> ”                  |
| 8.  | Julio        | <i>[Es gente del area de</i><br><i>velocidad, de vallas [de saltos.</i><br><i>velocity, hurtles, and jumping!”</i><br>“ <i>It’s people in the area of</i>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.  | Rene         | <i>[Si</i><br>“ <i>Yes.</i> ”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10. | Bureaucrat 1 | <i>Esa parte sí podemos solucionar.</i><br>“ <i>We can resolve that part.</i> ”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 11. | Julio        | <i>Entones cual es la solución ‘Atleta’, la solución ‘Atleta’, Rene, todos, nos tenemos que unir de una vez toda la gente del fondo del medio fondo</i><br>“ <i>So what is the solution, ‘Athlete’? The solution, ‘Athlete’, Rene, everyone, we have to unite ourselves at once all of the people in long-distance and middle-distance running.</i> ” |
| 12. | Athlete3     | <i>Eso es lo que yo quería.</i><br>“ <i>That is what I wanted.</i> ”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

Latching and overlapped agreement blossomed, as bureaucrats urgently, if not embarrassedly, aligned with the staff. In effect, the see-saw flipped, and bureaucrats were forced to backpedal amidst broad indignation, to proffer hollow support in the nooks of transition spaces between turns. The seed of an athlete’s indignation had bloomed into a line of reasoning followed far past the local misbehaviors that were the initiation of the trial. First came the split of athlete and national administrators, next the split of capital and provinces as forces in agonistic tension, and finally the geographical scaling of that tension across the country:

*“Because they do to us whatever they like in Lima, and it is done by people who have no results and will never have them, because they have believed during many years that they were track-and-field, and today it isn’t so, track-and-field has nothing to do with Lima. Huancayo, Cusco, Puno, we are track-and-field, and they don’t want to recognize that, they don’t give a damn who [you are]<sup>53</sup>.”*

Fiery and indignant, Julio declares the highlands the track-and-field of today, listing from north to south the shining gems of high-altitude accomplishment in the Andes, explaining that the

complaint of a solitary Indigenous athlete cannot overcome the entrenched centralization (*centralismo*) of a “they” in Lima, urging the collectivity of national endurance running to join forces.

From an original setup that sought to isolate the athlete and foreground the power of the bureaucrats, the group has arrived at a regrouping of athlete and staff against a centralized bureaucracy. From dyadic exchanges between bureaucrats enabling the airing of athlete’ grievances came exchanges enabling the airing of grievances among staff members, who piggy backed off Athlete3’s complaint. This denotational slippage created interactional space for cascading re-alignments, waves of pronominal regrouping that see-sawed about the athlete’s behavior. The staff regrouped against the bureaucracy, launching its own critique of centralized sport, while invoking a new “we” that included the athletes under the banner of highland endurance running, a power positioned against Lima and its entrenched sports inequality. As the proceedings came to a close, with the impersonal assertion among the bureaucrats that “the issue will be analyzed well” (*el tema se va a analizar bien*) ringing in the room as all emptied out of it, it was here, at what might possibly be the end of the athletic journey—from legislative constitution to recorporealization—that the commodity had come into form. Here, the athlete-citizen had been dialogically brought to life.

## **7.6 Sports as a Form of Embodied Precarity**

Cusco’s Association of Journalists’ award for ‘Athlete of the Year’ was not a trophy but a plaque, not as towering as the others that surround it now in the commons, though its gold engraving shimmered with a refined subtlety against the dark wood grain of the base, making up for any deficiency with respect to its height. Huayra had to shed her skirt, blazer, and heels, then

leave the award among the trove when she returned from Cusco's *centro historico* after the midday ceremony to honor her. Had to wash the makeup from her face and return to the comfort of her jumpsuit before descending to the track. She had already begun her warmups when Nina appeared, returning from *Raymi* after weeks away from training. Nina's grin invited playful castigation from Idalberto when she tip-toed to the tower to greet him, but no consequences met her. Because, of course, she was no longer a resident in the training center. She had been expelled, along with all the others with whom she was detained many months prior, all forced out by a blanket penalty that met no accusation of favoritism and left no room for nuance. Seven months after the expulsion, Nina's legs are noticeably less defined. She smiles the smile of a high schooler doing exercise after the school day, untethered from the routine. Despite her cheery exterior, Nina looks to Huayra like she is caught in a valley: "*with her I don't know if it's embarrassment or disappointment, but a person should always hold their head high*<sup>54</sup>."

After their interrogation, the athletes were held in limbo, provisionally penalized while the national headquarters deliberated a final verdict. Despite local efforts to keep the matter contained, news of the event leaked to the press, and journalists began to publish articles lambasting the training center staff for an abuse of authority. The staff themselves fell into their own ethical predicament vis-a-vis Cusco's general public, as reporters began blitzing the asphalt and the front entrance to the sports campus, demanding interviews at the gates in the perimeter fence, thrusting microphones into the faces of weary coaches passing back to their offices, tired of the ethical quagmire. "Expulsion for Retaliation" (*Expulsan por represalias*) read one title, speaking of "those who want to kill sport" (*quienes quieren matar el deporte*):

*"These athletes, the majority of whom come from provinces distant from Cusco, are abandoned, they will skew their studies, they will have family conflict, they will cease*



*training, they will lose continuity, they will not have appropriate nutrition, and worst of all, they break a cycle in sports training with a very high competitive level<sup>55</sup>, ” (Diario Cusco August 21, 2018 p.15)*

In contradistinction to the interrogations that would ultimately lead to expulsion, this was a characterization of rural provenance that invited caretaking and compassion, a denouncing of punitive action that would “abandon” the many temporal trajectories bundled together in the Indigenous athlete: their education, their training, their social development. Where the staff had invoked a provincial marginalization to muster high-altitude athletes against their coastal antagonists, local press allocated blame to urban bureaucrats who operated “*against people of humble origins, who for their social status do not know the route nor the form of defending themselves<sup>56</sup>*” (*ibid*).

The staff were caught in a public relations pincer between Lima and the regional press. They risked the expulsion of star athletes, a possibly catastrophic drop in medals, and ensuing public embarrassment. Alternatively, proposing no punishment might jeopardize their employment for a perceived lackadaisical approach. Coaches, like their athletes, meandered in limbo, fearing their investments in the embodied gifts of those on the chopping block would be all for naught, bewildered that something as counter intuitive as an expulsion were even possible. “*Do they really know, what sacrifice must be made in order to forge an athlete? How much has the state invested in each one of these kids during so many years<sup>57</sup>?*” The questions tumbled regularly from Idalberto’s and Julio’s mouths, for whom the thought of severing the athletes from the center was akin to amputation, like removing a living part of themselves, a condemnation to “begin from zero” (*empezar de cero*) with a yet another generation of novices requiring even more years of dedicated labor, another gamble on new sports prospects with promise but no guarantee of reward. Expulsion would hurt “like a bucket of cold water to the

face” (*como un balde de agua fria en la cara*) the technical director explained: “*and what I cannot understand is how they want to destroy so many youngsters, that they want to disappear them, as if they were enemies, they are no one’s enemies*<sup>58</sup>.” The case seemed illogical in its severity, a mismatch of infraction and sanction. In the end, the staff proposed to the national office only a temporary suspension, striving to temper the broad strokes of national authority, to carve out a space for a more nuanced, sociological understanding of adolescents cracking, forgivably so, under pressure. But the authority of the staff was limited.

In the end, their proposal was rejected, and suddenly life beyond the perimeter fence became an urgent reality for those asked to leave. Left behind, looking out from the campus to the street beyond the fence, Huayra would contemplate their departure: “*sometimes I say: what would be of my life if I left here*<sup>59</sup>?” For many who leave the institution, the internalized disciplinary rhythms they develop while living in such close proximity to the means for renewing their labors cause trouble on the outside. Unable to reintegrate, many face depression and listlessness, report waking at the crack of dawn in preparation for training only to toss and turn restlessly when they remember they no longer are professional athletes, report struggling to prepare meals that had been laid before them every day. The embodied residues of training now permeate acclimation to post-training life for those who had accustomed themselves to a “life with hours” (*vida con horas*).

The exit modalities from the training center—expulsion, retirement, withdrawal—become a kind of corporeal condemnation for athletes who have developed a highly attuned proprioceptive awareness that they struggle to re-habituate—and monetize—upon leaving state-sponsored sport. Add to that an embodied and temporal unfolding, as years of tightly regimented day-to-day activities unreel and crumple while the body shucks and sloughs its painstakingly

learned movement patterns—its expectation for meals at certain times, its anticipation of activity at certain times, still adapted to a highly regimented schedule split between rest and action—and crisis results. Those that watch their friends leave are left to sulk. In the wake of the expulsions, Chaki, having already contemplated his stay in the center, seems even less focused than before. *“To do my repetitions there is no one,”* he laments. *“I run only with the hour. There is no one who follows me or pulls me. Or someone who motivates me. To go together. Nothing<sup>60</sup>.”* As Chaki’s training partners leave in pursuit of education, he is left alone, with “the hour” only, and loses motivation without communicative and social scaffolding, like many before him.

Struggling to grasp at new anchors, feeling their embodied preparedness as much a weight as a reward, athletes now labor to make sense of their temporal trajectories. The progress that was their end all be all fragments before their very eyes. Nursing injuries and eyeing alternative routes forward, Michi laments her physical degradation:

*“I have a Pan-American medal. I have a South American medal. But I don’t have results anymore. I know that my numbers have suffered. The injuries. I try to train well, then it starts to hurt, and then I falter. I would have liked to stay at that level where I was, because the marks that I’ve done in 2015 are better than those I do now, the repetitions. I feel my plans here are coming to an end. Before, I had a dream of arriving to the Olympic Games, but not anymore. Now thinking in my studies<sup>61</sup>.”*

The trampoline fully loaded, it now ejects its cargo to adjacent institutions, for athletes come to witness the cost of pursuing and cultivating the gift, the cost of the setting foot on the trampoline that would launch them to rewards in the first place: the center has exacted its toll, through sculpting the body and through injury, but also by taking time. Athletes have been encased in a pipeline, and when they emerge the sun blinds, they are disoriented. If the athlete, *“upon finalizing their sports cycle is to integrate into society, then they need to arrive as a completely*

*formed person*<sup>62</sup>” (Radio IPD, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017), many athletes reintegrate as split persons instead, grasping at milliseconds that tumble from their personal records, a detraining that eats away at the metrics that have been their labor for so long, while struggling to attend classes in a new routine for which they have had little experience to prepare them.

The irony, of course, is that the nation shoots itself in the foot, loses the very talents it has legislatively and institutionally constituted, picks adherence to code over the ‘integral cultivation’ of which its radio broadcasts speak. “*The athlete,*” pipes the national director of sport “*ought to dedicate themselves to a training program and complete it but apart from that they also ought to develop themselves as a person in parallel*<sup>63</sup>,” (Radio IPD 2017 April 8<sup>th</sup>). But those expelled from Cusco were not injured, nor did they relent. They took a wrong step and were excoriated for it. Leaving family, friends, and the familiar behind, they came to Cusco to train: “*it’s a sacrifice that they make, but they know that in elite sports performance they will need to make those kinds of sacrifices*<sup>64</sup>” (Radio IPD, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017). Reflecting on the institutional pruning that has severely dwindled the training roster in Cusco, a flummoxed Daniel contemplates national progress in the lead up to the games with local mismanagement and the shattering of sporting dreams. Like Idalberto, his reservations are clear:

*“The question is, until when? I don’t know if it’s that they think of Peru until the Pan-American Games, or if you have already prepared for the Pan-American Games and you want to continue growing and sustain that line. What happens after the Pan-American Games? It’s something that is not very clear*<sup>65</sup>.”

The bodies tumultuous energies tiptoe the precipice between life worlds. An anxiety regarding embodied habits and schema that are precariously oriented to particular kind of labor permeates athletic careers in Cusco, for even after years of dedicated training and competition, an exit from the center can render a cultivated readiness almost obsolete.

## 7.7 Conclusion: Diagnosing Misbehavior to Resolve Communication Gaps

Acosta (2012) called the effects of high-altitude travel a “seasickness” (*mareado*) on earth, a dizzying spell that made legs quake, like the performance compromising effects of alcohol. But alcohol in the dormitories was a “harmful” (*dañina*) substance that provoked, for the state, the wrong kind of dizziness. At the lip of the bottle intersected competing meta-semiotic typifications of a misbehavior, all wrangling to mold the ethical significance of their object, though to opposite ends and to misaligned interventions: was this an adolescent misstep or the unforgivable failure of an athlete-citizenry? Whereas embodied response behavior on the track comes to signify a capacity—or lack thereof—to come alive to the call of the coach (see chapter six), heeding the call to proper conduct inside the training center—materialized in the graphic forms of a signed contract, a textual promise to adhere to an explicit *reglamento*—comes to signify a national commitment.

This call came to be discursively played out in scaled stance taking that linked national crisis to local misbehavior. Stances towards the games in the Peruvian congress mobilized interactional alignments among political factions, while stances among athletes and bureaucrats regarding the severity of a purported infraction mobilized interactional alignments for and against a regional sports supremacy. In a conversational tug of war that swung brusquely in a contested scaling haunted by dialogical echoes of “us” and “them,” inter-discursive resonances between domains scaffolded political action (Bakhtin 1981; Tedlock & Mannheim 1996). Individual bodies became focal points of social contestation, and different groups vied to channel their perceived productive capacities towards competing interests. Each ethical crisis—the floodwaters in Lima and the inebriation in Cusco—pried open dialogue saturated with ethicalizing stance acts, all

attempting to suture back together the ruptured calm of the path to progress. As Lemon argues, “to be involved in projects that invent ‘gaps’ in order simultaneously to ‘make contact’, to force a rupture and then to try to suture it, may be a way to claim to make modernity” (Lemon 2013 p.84), and the modernities forged by bureaucrats, athletes, and staff members only fractionally aligned, as each faction worked to crystallize a future for itself.

In the end is an ironic equivalence of the “trampolines” of which coaches speak, for if athletes use the training center as springboard to institutional access such as education and employment, then the Peruvian government uses the Sports Institute—and its preparations for the Pan-American Games—as springboard to global modernity. For though nations are not homologous political units, “on the baseball diamond, the athletics track, and in the boxing ring, they seem much more equitable in prowess and skill” (Besnier et al 2017 p.207). In each case the phatic traces (Nozawa 2015) of opening channels remain: on the one hand a recruitment modality that privileges impoverished populations communicatively scaffolds expectations with promises of doors opening, letting embodied potential flow but also mobility pathways that challenge progress. On the other, securing the hosting rights for a hemispheric mega-competition creates cascading ethical dilemmas, an infrastructural debacle overrun by rising floodwaters.

In the end, the training center staff are not simply a meso-level recapitulation of the national headquarters, “not just another neat case of fractally recursive "reproduction" (as Durkheim and Mauss suggested), where one set of distinctions is reiterated at a higher or lower scalar order (Irvine and Gal 2000), like the rippling out of tiered concentric circles from a pebble tossed into a pond” (Lempert 2012 p.150). As I have tried to show, the staff is not the mouthpiece of a governing ideology. On the one hand, this is because the roles of athlete-citizen and coach are partially interchangeable: coaches also come to labor for the nation in their commitment to

maximize the gifts of their athletes, and so take stances against institutions that would stand in the way of that progress. There is a body multiple (Mol 2002), though not simply as a body iterated in discourse, but a body articulated across social collectives. All come to wield a commodity register (Agha 2011), inhabiting exchange relations that pivot about the embodied labor of sports cultivation, while coming alive to the commodity form of high-altitude endurance through chains of meta-semiotic activity.

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<sup>1</sup> “Muchas gracias por la entrevista, y agradecer también a ustedes por difundir esto. Satisfecho con el resultado, hoy día el cuerpo no reaccionó como debería hacer pero dimos lo mejor de nosotros para captar una medalla por el Peru y para darle una alegría a la población que vino hoy día a alentarnos.”

<sup>2</sup> “La mitad de la pista corría el viento fuerte, y la otra mitad era calor. Y como que nadie quería jalar porque no quiere perder nadie tampoco entre nosotros, hemos jalado muy poco, mas despacio, así de estrategia.”

<sup>3</sup> “Señora Presidenta del IPD, entrenadores, compañeros de atletismo, trabajadores del IPD, trabajadores del CEAR Cusco, muchas gracias. Agradecer por el recibimiento que nos hicieron.”

<sup>4</sup> “Sabemos que los jóvenes del CEAR se van en pleno a Lima a cosechar más medallas, pero estarán representados por todos nosotros en el desfile por el día del IPD nacional. ¡Un fuerte aplauso!”

<sup>5</sup> “¿A eso van a la casa? ¿A no entrenar? A eso van a la casa.”

<sup>6</sup> “Que clase de atleta. Que vayan a la casa, que no sean capaces de entrenar. Y entrando recién a un centro de alto rendimiento. ¿Creen que se lo merecen? No se lo merecen. Deberían estar en sus casas. Es donde deberían estar ustedes.”

<sup>7</sup> “Como dice la Rumi, mas entusiasmo para Huayra y para Phawaq, nos parece pues. Para Nina, Huayra, y Phawaq. Para los tres. Como ella es campeona, no se si será por eso, pero menos ya me alentaba.”

<sup>8</sup> “Es más, ya no vamos a hacer más nada. Váyanse para arriba, para el CEAR. Ya. Váyanse. No entrenen más.”

<sup>9</sup> “Se van a sus casas, y van a pasear, y se olvidan que son atletas. Se olvidan que son atletas.”

<sup>10</sup> Like Lempert (2013) argues that Habermas smuggles liberal-democratic ideals into the ideal speech situation, here we might argue that sports organizations do the same with the playing field, that presumed level and fair space where equal convene in spirited—and just—competition.

<sup>11</sup> “Extraño el campo, la convivencia de la familia. Pero no la vida del campo.”

<sup>12</sup> “Dije algún día me voy a ir de acá. Es un sacrificio estar allí. Cuando llegue estaba feliz. Feliz porque ya no iba estar lavando, cocinando, o ir detrás de mis ganados.”

<sup>13</sup> “Estás en la casa, y el campo mismo, es como que, la lluvia te moja y no te cambias, entonces sigues allí mojada hasta que seques. Siempre era la lluvia. Para ir al colegio, lluvia.”

<sup>14</sup> “Hay pocos chicos que tienen esa fuerza de levantarse y decir: voy a seguir. Eso es lo que pasa con los talentos, pierden la oportunidad.”

<sup>15</sup> “Siempre digo que debería ir mas allá, no quedarme.”

<sup>16</sup> “Un deportista tenía que pagarse su pasaje si se quería ir a competir en Lima, y no tenía entrenador, e iba en bus.”

<sup>17</sup> “Les faltan muchas cosas para poder rendir al máximo.”

<sup>18</sup> “La expresión del desarrollo de cultura en un país.”

<sup>19</sup> An ironic fact that the Sports Institute had not even been founded in the previous outing.

<sup>20</sup> “Estamos apostando por algo que no va mas allá.”

<sup>21</sup> Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana.

<sup>22</sup> *Decretos legislativos N1248 & N1335.*

<sup>23</sup> *Confederación Nacional de Instituciones Empresariales Privadas.*

<sup>24</sup> *“Creo que deberíamos de orientar todos los recursos que pudieran invertirse en los Panamericanos para reconstruir el área norte.”*

<sup>25</sup> *“El Perú ha aceptado ser el huésped para los Juegos Panamericanos en una competencia donde le ganamos a otros países. Sería realmente una tragedia no poder cumplir.”*

<sup>26</sup> *“Van a ser los juegos Pan-Americanos el gran despegue del deporte Peruano, o van a ser el debacle del deporte Peruano?”*

<sup>27</sup> *“¿Qué pasaría si perdemos los Juegos Panamericanos Lima 2019?”*

<sup>28</sup> *“Otros países empiezan a ver al Peru por la falta de compromiso.”*

<sup>29</sup> *“Sacar adelante al Peru y obtener la mayor cantidad de medallas possible.”*

<sup>30</sup> *“Pueden sacar adelante las dos cosas.”*

<sup>31</sup> *“La elite del deporte Peruano, los llamados a disputar las medallas para nuestro país en el gran evento que vamos a organizar.”*

<sup>32</sup> *“Si viene el presidente, o el congreso, y dicen: “invertimos no se cuantos cientos de millones, logramos tres medallas, ¿y? ¿Que es nuestro deporte? ¿Esto es nuestro deporte a nivel Pan Americano?” Si a alguien se le ocurre, que todo lo que se hizo durante 2019 fueron gastos, y que van a quedar infraestructura e infraestructura y que la mayoría no va a reportar nada, va a decir “pues remodelemos y hacemos hoteles.””*

<sup>33</sup> *“Todo la misma rutina. Me cansa, y digo ¿para que sigo corriendo?”*

<sup>34</sup> *The South American Games in Cochabamba, Bolivia.*

<sup>35</sup> *“Cuando estaba en el nacional, como quede primera, después de ese nacional no tenia ganas de entrenar. Sentí que allí llegue al limite. Se iba mi mundo para abajo. Y fui al ODESUR y gané, y peor, para abajo. No fui a la Copa en Lima, y el prof. Idalberto me dice “hay una chica que corrió dos segundos menos que tu.” Allí sí, desperté.”*

<sup>36</sup> *“No les gusta el exigirse demasiado, cobardes ya. Prefieren estar haciendo otras cosas, no entrenar.”*

<sup>37</sup> When it comes to managing pain on the track, coaches can pull the meta-pragmatic rug out from under the feet of their athletes in a heartbeat. Take, for example, Wawqe’s attempts to solicit attention to his distress after an unsatisfying series of 800 meter dashes:

|   |       |                                                                                              |                                       |
|---|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Wawqe | <i>Ahh=</i><br>“Ahh!”                                                                        | Wawqe grips ankle and scrunches face. |
| 2 | Julio | <i>=Ahh que</i><br>“What ‘ahh’?”                                                             |                                       |
| 3 |       | <i>Eso creo que lo aprendiste en el jardín</i><br>“I think you learned that in kindergarten” |                                       |
| 4 |       | <i>Ahh</i><br>“Ahh.”                                                                         | Wawqe smirks and desists.             |

Wawqe’s response cry is met with teasing disregard. Without missing a beat, Julio reframes the exclamation (“ahh!”) as kindergarten alphabet recitation (‘ahh’ is the phone for ‘a’ in standard Spanish), sucking the life out of the allusion to a possibly insurmountable obstacle like pain or injury.

Counters to athletes’ claims are rapid and latched, poetic and terse, sometimes tactically fired off when they are physically incapable of vocal protest for their literal lack of breath, unable to say very much between heavy gasps after intense repetitions. Below, the cross-turn lexico-syntactic parallelism of Rene’s “format tying” (Goodwin 1990) replaces Atoq’s physical body part with a metaphysical soul, coating the complaint with an ethical overtone, the pain of a coach seeing his athlete make excuses:

|   |      |                                                                                             |
|---|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Atoq | <i>Profe me está doliendo demasiado la rodilla=</i><br>“Coach my knee is hurting too much.” |
|---|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



|   |      |                                                |
|---|------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2 | Rene | =A mi me duele el alma<br>“My soul hurts me.”  |
| 3 |      | A ti te duele la rodilla<br>“Your knee hurts,” |
| 4 |      | A mi me duele el alma<br>“My soul hurts.”      |

Humorously invoking the emotional anguish of seeing Atoq falter, Rene reframes his ailment as an ethical failing. Turning the knife moments later, he informs Atoq’s drill partner that he “will have to work alone now” (*es a solas que tienes que trabajar ahora*), casting Atoq’s withdrawal from the session as a condemnation not only of the coach but also of the other runners to whom he is beholden. Exchanges like this flush out discomfort as an acceptable explanation for performative failure, and athletes signaling pain are quickly lambasted for a perceived lack of resiliency.

<sup>38</sup> “La mayoría no domina eso. Que hay un estado así y no se pueden levantar.”

<sup>39</sup> “Entran con un nivel así, pero cuando ven la realidad de lo que es un entrenamiento de alto nivel, no sostiene ese entrenamiento.”

<sup>40</sup> “Una beca, acceso a educación, acceso a comida, acceso a un equipo técnico.”

<sup>41</sup> “La forma en que eran captados era vendido como trampolín.”

<sup>42</sup> “En el colegio donde estaban anteriormente no les gustaban el deporte, pero sin embargo si tenían el talento. Como ellos veían la posibilidad—me van a dar oportunidades, me van a dar en algo que soy bueno—ellos lo verían como el efecto trampolín, pero cuando llegaban al CAR, la situación era completamente diferente porque no era un colegio de internados, sino era un centro de entrenamiento.”

<sup>43</sup> “Chicos que llegan con talento acá, y era como que buscaban otras cosas, para ellos entrenar no era su objetivo.”

<sup>44</sup> “Chicos que quieren estar acá, pero posiblemente no tienen un poco de talento.”

<sup>45</sup> “Que los muchachos que vengan sean para sumar.”

<sup>46</sup> “Es normal”, Daniel and Michael will often say with regard to budding adolescent love, and they describe the tension involved in reconciling this human development with the strict procedures of the training center. *Amorous relationships are technically not allowed, though like all things there is a kind of gray area here. Daniel says: “que lo disimulen”, as in, don’t push it in everyone’s faces.* There have been occasions where amorous relationships in the center have compromised athlete work ethic, with athletes distracting one another from training.

<sup>47</sup> “Cuando se dan cuenta realmente lo que están haciendo dicen este sacrificio no es para mí. Yo no estoy hecho para este sufrimiento, para este día a día, de tanto esfuerzo de tanta voluntad que hay que poner. No todo el mundo esta hecho de ese temple tan fuerte.”

<sup>48</sup> Referred to in the center as “millionario”.

<sup>49</sup> As opposed to “serious” (*grave*) and “light” (*leve*).

<sup>50</sup> Though all names are pseudonyms, I redact athlete names in this sensitive section to further guard their identities.

<sup>51</sup> “Dicen que somos familia. Que ellos son como nuestros papas. No es así pues. El trato no es así como alguien fuera tu papa acá. Al único persona que yo veré como mi papa, el único persona sera mi entrenador, a los demás no.”

<sup>52</sup> “Hay deportistas que ganan mas que yo con menos resultados.”

<sup>53</sup> “Porque nos hacen lo que les da la gana en Lima, y lo hace gente que no tiene resultados ni los va a tener jamas, porque ellos han creído durante muchos años que el atletismo eran ellos, era Lima, y hoy en día no es, el atletismo no tiene nada que ver con Lima, el atletismo somos Huancayo, Cusco, Puno, y eso no lo quieren ellos reconocer, les importa cuatro pepinos quien [eres tu].”

<sup>54</sup> “Con ella no se si sera pena o decepción, pero una persona siempre debe mantener la cabeza en alto.”

<sup>55</sup> “Estos deportistas que en su mayoría son de provincias lejanas del Cusco, quedan en el desamparo, distorsionarán sus estudios, tendrán conflictos familiares, dejarán de entrenar, perderán continuidad, no tendrán la alimentación adecuada, y los mas grave, rompen un ciclo de vida deportiva con un nivel muy alto de competencia.”

<sup>56</sup> “En contra de gente de condición humilde, y que por sus estatus social no saben el camino o la forma de defenderse.”

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<sup>57</sup> “¿Conocen realmente, cual es el sacrificio que hay que hacer para formar a un atleta? ¿Cuanto ha invertido el estado en cada uno de estos chicos durante tantos años?”

<sup>58</sup> “Y lo que no puedo entender es que quieran destruir a tantos jóvenes, que se quieran desaparecer, como si fueran enemigos, no son enemigos de nadie.”

<sup>59</sup> “Yo digo a veces que seria de mi vida si yo salgo de acá?”

<sup>60</sup> “Para hacer mis repeticiones no hay nadie. Solamente corro con la hora. No hay nadie que me siga o que me jale. O alguien que me motive. Para ir juntos. Nada.”

<sup>61</sup> “Tengo medalla de panamericano. Tengo medalla de suramericano. Pero ya no tengo resultados. Se que mis números han bajado. Las lesiones. Trato de entrenar bien, luego empieza a dolerme algo, y luego bajo. Me hubiera gustado quedarme en ese nivel donde estaba porque ahora, las marcas que he hecho en 2015, son mejores que ahora que las que hago, las repeticiones. Siento que mis planes acá ya se están terminando. Antes tenia sueño de llegar a un juegos olímpicos, pero ya no. Ahora pensando en mis estudios.”

<sup>62</sup> “Al finalizar su ciclo deportivo se va a integrar a la sociedad, y entonces tiene que llegar como una persona completamente formada.”

<sup>63</sup> “El deportista debe dedicarse a un programa de entrenamiento y cumplirlo pero ademas de eso debe desarrollarse como persona en paralelo.”

<sup>64</sup> “Es un sacrificio que ellos hacen, pero saben que en el deporte de alto rendimiento van a tener que hacer esos tipos de sacrificios.”

<sup>65</sup> “El tema es, ¿hasta cuando? Yo no se si es que se piensa en el Peru hasta los Panamericanos o es que ya has formado para los Pan-Americanos y quieres seguir creciendo y sostienes esa linea. ¿Que pasa después de los Pan-Americanos? Es algo no muy claro.”

## Chapter 8 : Conclusion

### 8.1 Introductory Vignette: The Closing of the 2019 Pan-American Games



*Figure 8-1: Opening ceremony at the 2019 Pan-American Games*

*(Source: balichwonderstudio.com)*

*Pariacaca* erupts from the floor of the National Stadium, its ridges glistening, its angles sharp and meeting at forty-nine points<sup>1</sup>. The model towers twenty meters high, sectioned into a matrix of quadrants by criss-crossing channels of spotlight from above. Around its base convene nearly two thousand performers in a grid of intersecting shadows, upon them fifty thousand

encircling spectators peer down. Applause meets one scene then another showcasing the awesome breadth of Peruvian patrimony and heritage, from fashion to climate, gastronomy to art, coast to jungle to mountain, each vignette animated by the undulating movements of choreographed dances that occupy the first hour of the sold-out 2019 Pan-American Game's inauguration. All the cracks and fissures that lace the country are paved away, the ceremony smoothes everyday antagonisms and inequalities into an integrated whole, a stable, plurinational identity now beamed across satellites to consuming publics the world over. Dancing feet commute over the crests and troughs of the Jesuit Acosta's evil spot, the origin of the thin air that nearly killed him centuries before. This peak, of the same heights that fuel the lungs and power the legs of Anka, Huayra, Nina, Chaki, Phawaq, and all the others in Cusco's center, celebrated now by 550 million broadcast spectators and tens of thousands more howling inside the stadium, cheering for corporeal performances concocted in and by thin air atop *Pariacaca* and its neighbor ranges.

When all settle to take their seats, president Neven Ilıc of the Pan American Sports Organization stands and declares to the congregation: "*today the entire world watches you, and America admires you.*"<sup>2</sup> *Pariacaca* absorbs the admiration of a hemisphere while Peruvian president Martin Vizcarra ascends to the podium to address "*a land of great cultures, of an ancient history,*"<sup>3</sup> and with the power vested in him declares "*solemnly inaugurated the eighteenth Pan-American Games of Lima 2019.*"<sup>4</sup> On the heels of his explicit performative scurries a cadre of gold-clad Inca royalty over the mountain's surfaces, who assemble all the pre-Hispanic peoples of Peru below them to witness the ascent of the Pan-American flame. Recently arrived from its journey—beginning at the lighting ceremony in Teotihuacan, Mexico, then traveling through the heights of Machu Picchu, then zigzagging in descent to Lima through all

Peru's geographies—the torch is now relayed upwards by former Peruvian Olympians to its final terrestrial peak, setting ablaze an iron-cast sun atop a replica of Machu Picchu's *Intihuatana* that will shine for the full duration of the competition (*Media Guide IPD* 2019 p.42). With that, the country's spirit of sport is ritually unleashed to perform for and as the nation in the weeks to follow, during which time Peruvian athletes will vie for and secure forty-one medals, including two Pan-American record-setting golds by high-altitude natives in the men's and women's marathon events, an historic achievement that culminates nearly a decade of the bidding, preparation, organization, and cultivation of a nascent Andean sports contender.

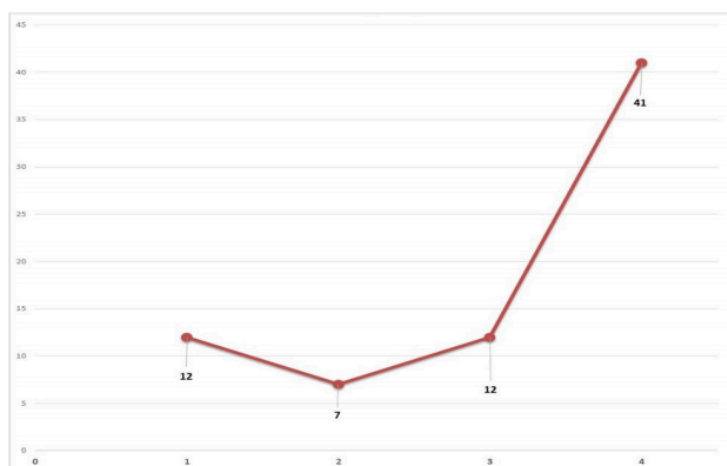
## **8.2 A New Understanding of Indigenous Incorporation into the Nation**

From its headquarters at the National Stadium in Lima, the Peruvian Institute of Sport has steadily orchestrated progress in long-distance running events at the continental and hemispheric level over the last decade. Hundreds of people labor to transform Indigenous Peruvian children of Quechua descent into national ambassadors who reap medals for their homeland at world sporting competitions. The transformation is painstaking. It takes a long time, and it requires the kids to bleed, sweat, and cry. It is by no means guaranteed to succeed, and plenty fail, abandonment, or are abandoned by their coaches when they hit and thereafter never surmount stretching plateaus. Promising recruits burn out when twice-daily training sessions turn from fun to torture. Potential champions from rural areas retreat from competition and invest themselves in education, an institutional access made possible by relocating to urban hubs. Yet for those who dig their feet in deep enough to overcome the pain of training for most of their young lives, who wince but persist when blisters on their shoe-clad feet rip and ooze, or aluminum hurdles scrape the skin from their juvenile shins, there is—some say—glory waiting.

Where is the glory? Perhaps it is in the Sports Institute’s “evolution of results” (*Memoria Anual IPD 2019* graph #1), a trans-historical self-assessment of the nation with the medal as the unit of measurement. Perhaps the glory resides in the pixelated images of the sharply inclining lines of a bureaucratic time series, the jerky ascent of one data point after another that sketch in series an upwards trend toward the distant heights of record-setting metrics. Perhaps progress is a number: forty-one medals (2019 chart #54), the best ever...or the best yet. Perhaps it is a rankable position emblazoned on an institutionally managed table for any curious investigator to corroborate (Panam Sports 2019): a top-ten finish among all the medal winners, another notch upwards, new graphic proximity to perennial hemispheric power houses of populations vastly greater, a commensuration of political power now possible vis-a-vis congealed, comparable achievements; each territory’s countable, citable medallions.

**Gráfico N° 01**

**Evolución de resultados – Juegos Panamericanos**



*Figure 8-2: Peru's total medal count at last four Pan-American Games*

(Source: *Memoria Anual IPD 2019*)

LIMA 2019  
PAN AMERICAN GAMES  
**MEDAL TABLE**



| FINAL POSITION | COUNTRY             | GOLD | SILVER | BRONZE | TOTAL |
|----------------|---------------------|------|--------|--------|-------|
| 1°             | United States       | 122  | 86     | 85     | 293   |
| 2°             | Brazil              | 54   | 45     | 69     | 168   |
| 3°             | Mexico              | 37   | 39     | 62     | 138   |
| 4°             | Canada              | 35   | 65     | 52     | 152   |
| 5°             | Argentina           | 33   | 34     | 34     | 101   |
| 6°             | Cuba                | 33   | 28     | 39     | 100   |
| 7°             | Colombia            | 27   | 24     | 31     | 82    |
| 8°             | Chile               | 13   | 19     | 18     | 50    |
| 9°             | Dominican Rep.      | 11   | 12     | 17     | 40    |
| 10°            | Peru                | 11   | 7      | 23     | 41    |
| 11°            | Ecuador             | 10   | 7      | 15     | 32    |
| 12°            | Venezuela           | 9    | 14     | 20     | 43    |
| 13°            | Jamaica             | 6    | 6      | 7      | 19    |
| 14°            | Puerto Rico         | 5    | 5      | 14     | 24    |
| 15°            | El Salvador         | 3    | 0      | 1      | 4     |
| 16°            | Guatemala           | 2    | 9      | 8      | 19    |
| 17°            | Trinidad & Tobago   | 1    | 7      | 3      | 11    |
| 18°            | Paraguay            | 1    | 3      | 1      | 5     |
| 19°            | Bolivia             | 1    | 2      | 2      | 5     |
| 20°            | Grenada             | 1    | 1      | 0      | 2     |
| 21°            | Costa Rica          | 1    | 0      | 4      | 5     |
| 22°            | Saint Lucia         | 1    | 0      | 1      | 2     |
| 23°            | Barbados            | 1    | 0      | 0      | 1     |
| 23°            | British Virgin Isl. | 1    | 0      | 0      | 1     |
| 25°            | Uruguay             | 0    | 4      | 4      | 8     |
| 26°            | Antigua & Barbuda   | 0    | 1      | 2      | 3     |
| 27°            | Honduras            | 0    | 1      | 1      | 2     |
| 28°            | Panama              | 0    | 0      | 4      | 4     |
| 29°            | Nicaragua           | 0    | 0      | 3      | 3     |
| 30°            | Aruba               | 0    | 0      | 1      | 1     |
| 30°            | Bahamas             | 0    | 0      | 1      | 1     |

Table 8-1: Total medal count by nation, Pan-American Games 2019

(Source: PanAmSports 2019)

In geopolitical spectacles of athletic dominance, new institutions for medal extraction meet old villages that weathered the carnage of resource prospecting centuries before. Progress for the Sports Institute obtains across the many different domains of its enterprise: from the counts of gold, silver, and bronze to the quality of hosting the event itself, in its own words a celebrated “world showcase” (*vitrina mundial*; *Memoria Anual IPD 2019*) that garnered the prize of ‘Most Improved National Olympic Committee’ at the first Panam Sports Awards ceremony late in 2019 (Orlando 2019). From the many graphic artifacts that crystallize Peru’s participation and victories in a mega-event of its own hosting emerges a story, one that Peru’s

sports bureaucracy tells itself about itself, “a metasocial commentary upon the whole matter of assorting human beings into fixed hierarchical ranks and then organizing the major part of collective existence around that assortment” (Geertz 1973 p.448). Peru’s bid to host the hemisphere is an aspiration to political heights still out of reach elsewhere, a fetishized dream (Dalakoglou 2012) to “take part in a contemporaneous modernity by repeating infrastructural projects from elsewhere, to participate in a common visual and conceptual paradigm of what it means to be modern” (Larkin 2013 p.333). In other words, atop the stage at the Panam Sports Awards ceremony in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Peru is “seen to be dynamic, progressive, and modern—in a word, ‘global’—before actually economically becoming so” (Besnier et al 2017 p.195).

Participation in new transnational blocs of competition demands transnational rendezvouses of far-flung experts and nascent athletes, their ensuing red-queen dynamics to “continue forward with whatever there is” (*seguir con lo que hay*), as those in the center often say. Without assemblages to gather distributed potentialities, under-equipped stragglers are “left behind” (*quedados*) by peer nations morphologically specializing at faster rates, denied access to global forums of power and prestige. Here, in the end, is a scalar lamination of cross-cutting routes to new circulating forms of global recognition: ‘city foot, country sandal’ applies both to Anka and the bureaucracy that employs him. Peru fits into global competition like Anka fits into his cleats on the track in Cusco; “you must do like them” (*tienes que hacer igual que ellos*) Anka explains, you must inhabit the forms of the systems that take hold of you. Like Anka pursues access in the city, the Sports Institute pursues access at the Pan-American Games; each entity pursues its own route to the podium of the world arena.



Notice then that revalorization via meta-semiotic retypification is itself scaffolded, that while Quechua peasants are revalorized as ascendant athletes by new circulating imaginaries of ecological potentialities, Peru is revalorized as an ascendant sports contender for its—their—successes, for small steps to close the international competitive gap. Body politics collapse upon themselves, each in lock step with the other, provoking new re-imaginings of performativity and performance studies in anthropology and related disciplines (e.g., Butler 1988; MacAloon et al 1984), ones guided by sifting through the materiality of athletic performance; its infrastructure, bodies, and communication practices. For “if our subject is skill and athletic performance on that level, rather than the sporting event, the scale of analysis will shift” (Downey 2006 p.5) towards a longitudinally organized research program demanding methodological tools sharp and precise enough to probe the finely attuned communicative regimens within which the enskillment that undergirds performance events proceeds. My theorization of kinesthetic translation is a step in this direction.

### **8.3 The Eco-Semiotic Labor of Kinesthetic Translation**

Kinesthetic translation in Cusco convenes expatriate coaches and Quechua athletes in their movements between Andean countryside and city, and at Lima’s 2019 Pan-American Games nations sought to translate their territorially distributed embodied potentials into the socially enregistered emblems of global sports success. In anticipation of widely regarded sports mega-events unfold scientific re-imaginings of latent potentialities dispersed among citizenries and diasporas, and elaborations of criteria for their detection and recruitment. Like the Games’ opening ceremony, the new paradigm of athletic talent assembles geographic and social diversity under the uniting rubric of national(ist) sports culture, then deploys itinerant meta-semiotic

experts familiar with circulating discourses of embodied ecology—new metapragmatic stereotypes that fix relations between ecologies and populations—to locate and capitalize upon perceived human-environment prowess. In the Andes, this deployment folds back into itself past and contemporary knowledges gleaned in recruitments of high-altitude populations by human biology laboratories across the region (e.g., Frisancho et al 1995; Brutsaert et al 2003, 2004; Kiyamu et al 2012), an operationalization of laboratory research in new applied contexts on the ground.

Sports bureaucracies are not, after all, the only knowledge making institutions that draw from colonially spatialized populations, and herein lies the critical point: as Sanjinés notes, “history is actually interwoven with coloniality in a spatial distribution of nodules that fill a “structural” space, not merely a timeline” (2013 p.4-5). In other words, sports progress in Peru is a **somatic geography**, which inspires biometric protocols to recruit scientifically measurable local populations into the nodes of a knowledge production apparatus. Opening Peru’s somatic geographies to international sports competition thus regards two correlated openings simultaneously: (1) of the flow of autochthonous talent pools into the national infrastructure of their development, and thereafter into the capillaries of transnational competition circuits; (2) of the country to visiting competitors in celebrated mega-events hosted at home. Two plights to gain access are laminated upon each other: one to gain access to the world stage of elite athletics, one to gain access to the purported gifts of Indigenous athletes. Coaches and athletes, I have argued, **open & cross** eco-communicative channels to accomplish these objectives.

If athletic programmers in Peru envision the gift of Indigenous populations as pre-discursive *i.e.* outside of the (educational) infrastructure and its attendant movement socialization routines, their cultivation of the gift is nevertheless mediated by language; language is perceived to

disentangle the gift from its communicative constraints, like a helix unravelled; to make it identifiable *and* quantifiable in recruitment; to progressively extrapolate future performances from present ones during metrically organized training blocks. All this is accomplished while athletes themselves learn to speak the language of the coaches. As I have aspired to show, the semiotic labor by which athletes and their coaches reach these goals is best understood with reference to two of Jakobson's six principal speech functions: the phatic and the poetic (Jakobson 1960, 1966). In the Andes, phatic infrastructures of communicative laborers canvass the countryside, that is, conversationally traverse immense distances with a network of talk that funnels (word of) emerging talents to discrete nodes. From there, coaches initiate search missions within their communicative grid, following coordinates to find new contenders. A cultural heritage of folk social-scientific findings informs an ethno-metapragmatics of talent in the countryside, what we might call a culture of hypoxia, that recruits once marginalized populations into new athletic development projects.

Once identified in ritual enxtextualizations of physical potential, new talents funnel into refinement centers, training institutions from which they drop into ecological channels and shuttle from mountain to coastal ecologies, seeking to reap embodied rewards in the differential between the space-times. As I have shown, the reward lies not in the simple passage from one ecology to another, but in a communicatively scaffolded embodiment that breathes within and across them. I have theorized this embodiment as an eco-chronotopic calibration, synthesizing the tools of linguistic anthropology's poetic turn with cultural and medical anthropological engagements with body enhancement, approaching discourse chunks of word and movement as a narrative emplotment (Silverstein 1984, 2004) of body cultivation, as fractionally congruent repetitions across training blocks in broad time. 'Now/then' and 'here/there' deictic poetic

constructions cleave these ecologies into measurable and navigable space-times; the body's exertion within them is not the pre-linguistic substratum upon which are layered communicative behaviors, rather it is entangled in communicative routines and sequences that arrange it in time and space (see e.g., Mannheim 2018 p155-118 on "mutual entrainment").

Arguably, sport is the arena par excellence of repetition, the repetition of deliberative practice and metric testing (Anders et al 1993; Ericsson 2013; Downey 2015). Like the datified medal count of the Institutes' annual progress reports, *controls* in Cusco's training center punctuate narrative arcs of individual progress. Notice that this is a markedly different theorization of poetic infrastructures than that encountered for example in Larkin's assessment (2013). Here, phatic infrastructures buttress socioeconomic mobilities, the corralling of talents into disciplinary channels, into an interaction laboratory where bodies can be recorporealized efficiently. Training sessions, as interaction chains, "assemble" actions within demarcated events as well as along a long-term, goal-oriented timeline, in dense webs of shouts, grunts, screams, and vocal strategizing, in interactional huddles that precede and proceed tests of individual and collective fitness. Cusco's sports program assembles (pre)competitive moments in much longer sequences out of which surface twin selves: performances actual and possible. Quechua athletes, in turn, toil to bring their training and competition selves into alignment, and they accomplish this intersubjectively. In their training, movement emerges dialogically in unfolding interaction ritual chains, it is scaffolded and refined interactionally, then delivered collaboratively to the public arena of its execution. Far from the individual endeavor of a bounded biological body, maximal sociality confronts maximal effort.

Among kinesiological and developmental biological studies of talent identification is the question of how youth gravitate to particular sports "in which they show an early aptitude"

(Brutsaert & Parra 2006 p.100). In these models, talent reveals itself as kids gravitate to what they like, or are encouraged to play this or that sport over others, or are funneled to this or that sport following racial and gendered ideologies of the “appropriate” kinds of physical activity for them (see Bruening et al 2008). Downey’s (2009) attempt to make sense of the relational outcome between early “preferences” and future development positions talent as “the difference that makes a difference”: “if resources are allocated depending upon early diagnosis of ‘talent,’ then talent matters. The more a society believes in ‘talent,’ the more likely it is to become a reality, and the greater disparity we are likely to find between those designated as promising from those who don’t show early promise.” In this view, the biological maturation of a sporting organism is inextricable from the socio-historic practices in which competitors are sorted; talent is not simply the bodily capacity of an untrained athlete—derived from genes, early childhood environment or the relation between them—but also political project that involves historically situated processes of ascribing preferences and dispositions, and ensuing allocations of resources into cultivating those preferences and dispositions.

Notice therefore that new, phenomenologically informed engagements with embodiment—particularly in sport—which purport to recenter the “sensuous” or “corporeal” subject as a counterweight to scientific objectivism (e.g. Allen-Collinson & Hockey 2009; Wacquant 2004) miss the fundamentally inter-subjective nature of reflexive signification—of which language use forms a part—and its role in talent ascription and cultivation, in creating the conditions for “sensuous experience” in sports-specific contexts in the first place. This dissertation has battled presumptions that the sensuous and corporeal are pre-linguistic or a-linguistic, while mapping new relations between language and body as they obtain in environments perceived to amend them. The view of athletic talent developed here has been an earnest attempt to push beyond

disciplinary sequestrations of subjective (phenomenological) experience and objective (scientific) markers, and further sub-disciplinary segregations of genetic and developmental adaptations on the one hand, environmental (*i.e.*, hormonal and nutritional) fluctuations on the other. In this vein, *City Foot Country Sandal* contributes to and disseminates linguistic anthropological engagements with language that push beyond the putative boundaries of the sub-discipline—and against recent tendencies to retreat from language toward materiality—by foregrounding language as signifying and material at once (see Nakassis 2013, 2016).

In Cusco, transitions among existential stances by which actors take up different attitudes to objects of their own experience—including their own experiences of *themselves*—are mediated by reflexive processes of signification (see also Duranti 2009, 2010), processes that emplace talents on the track where their embodied response behavior can be tightly monitored, their bodies “opened” to the passions of athletic becoming. Quechua athletes, as we have seen, come to take informed, reflective stances towards their own training via these activities; recapitulating the language and analyses of their coaches in displays of register competence; assessing eco-shocks that stunt sea-level performances and interrupt progress they have come to intuit through densely regimented communicative labor. They speak plainly about the role of language in intense training, about the vocal support or lack thereof between trainer and trainee, how it feels to be the recipient of vocal attention—praise, correction, scolding—and how it feels to have that vocal attention withdrawn, be it as punishment for an infraction or as an indication of a coach losing faith in the promise of a once-rising star. They have learned to narrativize the social shocks that disrupt their acclimation, habitualization, and social mobility with new registers of ethical cultivation, inter-discursively tethering their biographies to the nation as they hopscotch between social frames. It is in these senses that athletic cultivation equips individuals to

transition from pre-reflexive to reflective engagement with their own embodied experience, that is, to new “more reflective modes of existence that arise when we take up theoretical attitudes toward our own and others' actions” (Desjarlais & Throop 2011 p.88).

#### 8.4 The Curse of the Gift?

Is this liberation, or is this tragedy? Hundreds of years before Anka and company hopped into the training center and confronted its language practices, Quechua *Runa* from the rural hinterlands were hopping to the coastal capital to purchase Spanish words, or so the story goes (Mannheim 1991 p.82 *et passim*). By learning to articulate Spanish, they would arm themselves for ensuing verbal fencing in the courtroom if a settler seized their lands:

“In the town of *Huanta*, one time a few years back, an *hacendado* wanted to grab a community's lands. So the *Runa* of the community said,

"By speaking Spanish, he'll defeat us in this court case" they said.

"So what'll we do?" they said.

"It's best we go to Lima," they said.

So one Sunday, they had an idea [*yuyahsqaku*]. They selected three *Runa* with good memories [*allin yuyaysapa*] to come to this town of Lima to buy Spanish. Each one could only manage to buy one Spanish expression, because they cost so much. So they said,

"Which should we buy?"

"*Nuqayku*" ['we' or 'us', excluding the addressee].

"And another to go with it?"

"*Munaspayku*" ['because we want to . . .'].

"And after that?"

"*Chaytam munaniyku*" ['that's what we want]."

After purchasing the expressions in Lima, the three *Runa* return home. En route, they land themselves in inescapable trouble after mistakenly confessing to a murder they have not committed. By unknowingly responding to the Spanish-speaking Civil Guard in the affirmative to inquiries designed to ascertain the identities of the true assailants on the run ("we!", they respond), their motives ("because we want to!", they respond) and their twenty-five-year sentences ("that's what we want!", they respond to a judge), the trio erringly speaks its way into imprisonment.

Of course, as Mannheim notes the story is about far more than country rubes bumbling into big-city problems. It concerns individual and cultural memory in situations of language contact, for in colonial Peru "language was the source and pillar of cultural memory in a situation in which what was wanted was forgetting," (Mannheim 1984 p.297). It also concerns the plight of a language community's "subversive assimilation" (Mariátegui 2009 [1934]) into the colonial and national apparatus through second language acquisition<sup>5</sup>, for as Mannheim explains, "it is the tacit acceptance of Spanish domination as one of the background assumptions of social interaction that reflects and builds linguistic hegemony" (ibid, p.87). Spanish is far costlier than the market price the three *Runa* pay for it: speaking Spanish—and thereby acquiescing to its assumptions—reinforces its everyday hegemony. Witnessing an athletic migration ushering new rural populations into old urban hubs, we might ask: if then the *Runa* bought Spanish with money, do Anka and company now buy (into) their gift with their bodies? In his circular path from countryside sandal to city shoe, Anka has become entangled. Is his flesh bound by his word? Is he condemned to utter his own life sentence with victory speeches and



acknowledgments of authority, an incarceration by talk, a corporeal reduction to “the most miserable commodity” (Marx 1964 [1844]; see also Wacquant 2001)?

From colonial struggle to winning the hemisphere, the question of how ““archaic” but contemporaneous ethnic groups” (Sanjinés 2013, p.25) should be integrated into the modern nation remains. Of mechanisms of nation building, Sanjinés claims that “at issue is the homogenizing language, which, in casting aside vernacular languages, adopts the paternal language of the dominant elites. It is through the intermediary role of this dominant language that the nation is imagined and created” (Sanjinés 2013, p.61). Indeed, language acquisition and loss have remained the dominant frames through which to understand Indigenous migration in the Andes. The story goes like this: Indigenous communities progressively urbanize in zones which have served historically as geographic bases for national political infrastructure, that is, decision-making bodies of elected officials and the actual buildings that house them. Quechua peoples migrating to urban zones are linguistically and culturally marginalized first by pervasive Spanish-language norms in educational settings and service sector workplaces, and second by an elite urban register of the Quechua language itself (Mannheim & Huayua 2016) that provides the only Quechua-language entry to formal institutions like schools, courts, and hospitals. Failure to properly acquire rudimentary Spanish prevents Quechua-speaking migrants from participating in local and national political parties and from securing jobs that provide livable wages.

Migrating athletes who hopscotch into the training center in Cusco do not pursue a language *per se*—not the object called the Spanish or Quechua language (Agha 2007b)—but rather a register of language intimately tied to embodied feats. Recall that most, if not all, who arrive to the center cannot articulate their purported gift at first; athletes learn to narrate their embodiment after the fact. Language—both as a means for analysis and as a tool for

habitation—is situated between lifeworlds; it mediates entrance into and exit out of them. Accounts of Indigeneity in the Andes therefore must not miss sports recruitment as alternative strategy for access to citizenship, must not miss acquisition of athletic movement—and not necessarily of official language (i.e., Spanish)—as lubrication for mobility pathways. This dissertation has explored how champions are made with words, how words create new willpower and desire, instigate in the other an embodied enlivening under no one’s direct control. It has spotlighted the ways in which the body itself is concocted as a heteroglossic artifact (Murphy 2015 p.92-3) laced with the echoes of many voices—of coaches, politicians, legislators, parents—which congeal as “form-signs occupying several spheres at once” (*ibid*): a finely tuned athletic instrument, an integrated athlete-citizen, and a political commodity to secure medals and acclaim for a homeland under bright lights at mega-competitions.

As heteroglossic artifacts, Indigenous athletes in Cusco execute “double voiced” (Bakhtin 1984) movements: Quechua athletes learn to wield the embodied registers of their training as resources to secure their own futures, appropriating the tools of the system that recruits them while also perpetuating its project. Recall that Anka’s “present-day future imaginary” (Coronil 2011 p.232), his vision of the future which emanates from the present, challenges that of the Institute that houses him. “*Nuqa kutisaqcha q’alata kaykunata adquirispa o q’alata yachaqaspa, nuqa kutisaq llaqtayman yachachiq,*” he explains: “*I will return with all the things that I have learned, acquired, all the knowledge, I will return to my countryside to teach.*” From Anka’s movements fracture diverging paths towards competing ends and far-flung destinations, his action crystallizes multiple futures simultaneously, which proceed in dynamic tension: experts in the center corral his productive capacities to reap countable rewards, ones inflexible in the graphs of the Sports Institute’s annual reports, while Anka cultivates his embodied capital as a resource

for the family and community he must leave behind, albeit temporarily. My account of the athletic training of Quechua youth should not therefore be a eulogy, but instead a recognition of the flexibility of Andean Quechua communities. Hardly alien to it, Quechua athletes like Anka, like Gladys Tejada, are Peru's (literal) flag bearers to modernity, who deftly commandeer the sometimes-naturalizing language of their bureaucrats to forge new roads to the future, a strategic essentialism (Spivak 1988) that affords new access in historic bastions of socio-economic power.

At the same time, this is no unproblematic celebration of Indigenous triumphs over systems of oppression: despite their kinesthetic flexibility, Quechua sporting communities continue in a precarious position upon the uneven ground of national consciousness, a point that becomes painfully clear when we look at the aftermath of the Games. Consider first that shortly after winning gold at the 2019 Pan-American Games in Lima, Tejada was once again the target of racist stereotyping on popular Peruvian media, teased for her speech patterns and physical demeanor, for the “physical gifts” (*dotes fisicos*) and “four lungs” (*cuatro pulmones*) she developed laboring as a child in poverty (Mendoza 2019). In sum, the very same metapragmatic stereotypes that beckon coaches into the mountains to find their champions continued to pepper speech that denigrates Indigenous Andeans in public forums. Although the broadcast was widely denounced, even promptly by Peru's Ministry of Culture itself (*El Comercio* 2019), the point remains that revalorized human-environment interactions do not necessarily neutralize old valorizations; each remain as relatively stable social formations so long as a social domain of sign users acquainted with their forms perceives and enacts them.

A bigger scandal broke, however, for in the wake of the mega-event the Sports Institute suddenly cut funding through the *Athlete Support Program* for 147 on its roster, many of whom had competed in the Games and some of whom had even qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Waves of protests erupted from among the athletes, who deployed new strategic essentialisms to cast themselves as a super-citizen class abandoned by the state, twisting nationalist discourses to obtain resources from a bureaucracy that would celebrate the spoils of their labor then rescind compensation. Though the Institute, in the face of public scrutiny, promptly reinstated all the reclaimants in the program—hiding behind perhaps predictable bureaucratic excuses of miscommunication in the office (IPD 2019)—the drama brought old ghosts of sports mega-events to bear anew, the specters of population displacement and infrastructural ruin that haunted Rio and Beijing after their Olympic moments (Besnier et al 2017 p.185-188; see also Brownell & Besnier 2016).

Despite the International Olympic Committee's enshrined commitment to the "positive legacy" (IOC 2020 p.17; see also MacAloon 2011, Tomlinson 2014) of sports spectacles, anthropological examinations of the costs of mega events continue to draw attention to the embodied precarity of athletes. Some develop an embodied preparedness that wilts when support is withdrawn. Others are banned from competition for the sins of their employers *e.g.*, Russia's 2014 Sochi doping scandal, which continues to ripple in present-day competitions. Some are removed from competition due to gender regulations *e.g.*, Caster Semenya, who after a prodigious win at the world level invited scrutiny for her "unfeminine" appearance, for her outlandish musculature and thickness, eliciting the attention of regulatory wings of the International Olympic Committee, which subjected her to harsh gender testing (Karkazis et al 2012) and ultimately ending her career. Trapped between retirement and uncertain employment in Cusco, many Quechua athletes in the center have sought supplemental income by participating for prize money in marathons throughout the region and the country when they fail to post competition results that warrant extensions of their stipends. In sum, they learn to inhabit their

gift quite literally, that is, as their organisms transform, and as injuries and obstacles mount, deliberations about the longevity of the gift provoke discontinuities and disjunctures in the training trajectory.

### **8.5 New Equivalence Makers and Their Future-Building Translations**

Historically cast in the shadows, Quechua youth have been thrust into the spotlight of world competition, joining a wide cast of marginalized groups atop the national podium of global sport, from Maori rugby players (Hokowhitu 2004) to Kenyan long-distance runners (Bale & Sang 1996) to Caribbean cricket players (James 1963). Since the Pan American Games, two documentaries detailing the relation between endurance sport and Indigeneity have been produced and screened, one— “Endurance Race” (*Prueba de Fondo*)—revolving around the training life of Peru’s very own Inés Melchór in her preparations throughout the 2010s (Acuña et al 2019), the other— “The Infinite Race”—regarding the Tarahumare or Rarámuri (ESPN 2020) made famous in McDougall’s (2009) popular description of super endurance in Chihuahua, Mexico. In each, filmmakers and activists alike celebrate the achievements of Indigenous athletes, while also drawing historical links between their competition successes and cultural origins. Has Anka developed a respect for his “gift,” rather than a transactional relationship with it? Has he tapped into his Quechua inheritance, learned to accept and glorify his ancestors by receiving that which they have bestowed upon him? What is the real arena, and who is really performing for whom?

In practice, the double binds of athletic cultivation are shot through with ambivalences for Quechua youth and Indigenous communities across the planet. Subaltern sports cultures in the Global South and beyond are two-sided racializing phenomena: they are racialized products

of socially interlocked practices and are themselves productive of racialization. This dissertation has aspired to draw attention to transnational embodiments of race that transverse received geopolitical boundaries like nations, blocs, and borderlands, theorizing instead the very circulation and purveyance of human movement regimens. Tracking how a diverse cast of actors deploys regionally and scientifically specific racializing discourses that make sense of Indigenous movement, I have foregrounded the fraught and unexpected creation of an emergent and distinctly Peruvian modality of kinesthetic translation. My research on transnational circuits of Indigenous and Latin American sports cultures therefore orients to the entanglements of global Indigenities, citizen-making, and subaltern embodiments. Ultimately, I aspire to contribute to a growing movement of engaged ethnographers (Kirsch 2018), attentive to the agency and self-determination of Indigenous athletes as they navigate uncertain futures (see also TallBear 2013), while also creating room for ethnographic explorations of kinesthetic translations of many kinds and in many places.

Inspired by an emerging bio-cultural approach to ethnography, this new work would integrate sub-disciplinary insights from human biology, as well as linguistic and cultural anthropology to theorize connections between individual biological bodies and social political economy (Dressler 2005; Goodman & Leatherman 1998; see also Roberts & Sanz 2018 on “bio-ethnography”, Ingold & Palsson 2013 on “biosocial becomings”), attending to circulating metapragmatic stereotypes of environmental potential that beckon people and things across borders and boundaries (see Omura et al 2018, West 2020). For a cross-cultural comparison of interpreters in a non-institutional context, consider for example that the Tarahumare of Mexico came to be recruited in the first instance not by and sports organization, but by drug cartels, conscripted for their purported endurance running capacities on the assumption that they could

successfully ferry shipments across vast stretches in the borderlands between the United States and Mexico (Goldberg 2017).

Similar work on transnational athletic migration sees athletes “bought” for their gifts by territories with no local population resources to draw from, e.g., Qatar’s fast-tracked citizenship for endurance athletes of Kenyan and Ethiopian descent (Besnier & Brownell 2016, Besnier et al 2017). While the anthropology of sport has rightfully foregrounded racial reductionisms in global athletics, it has only begun to systematically explore transnational bureaucratic processes that invoke science to commodify and objectify postcolonial Indigenous bodies. The Pan-American Games in Peru marked a moment, but a crucial one, one that opened a bubble of possibilities within which bodies floated, a momentary field of signification within which old bodies acquired new meanings. We know that diverse environments across the planet require diverse adaptations that inflect cultural practice and human biological diversity, but much remains to be learned about how (perceived) adaptive diversity to environmental stimuli is woven into transnational projects that capitalize on the phenotypic variation of human populations when corporeal excellence is called for.

## **8.6 The Body at its Limits**

This dissertation is an in-between. It is a snapshot of an interval in Peruvian history when sport became a national priority—and a celebratory cause—in the lead up to and hosting of the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima. During my first preliminary dissertation research in Cusco, 2014, I had only just heard of the Pan-American Games, only just learned of Gladys Tejeda and Inés Melchor. A year later I watched them compete in and secure gold medals on television at Toronto’s 2015 Pan-American Games. Four years after that, I watched Tejeda in the flesh as she

broke the Pan-American marathon record to jubilation in Lima's *parque Kennedy*. In the final moment of the 2019 Pan-American Games closing ceremony the Panam Sports flag was passed from then-president of Peru Martin Vizcarra to president Sebastián Piñera of Chile (*Gobierno de Chile* 2019). Perhaps Chile will see the same thing, bubbles of possibility wherein embodied capacities are envisioned and pursued in its citizenry, moments where things lock into new coherence and thereafter are left to dissolve back into whatever flux was there before. Maybe there is an ethnographer in Chile who saw the ceremony and was inspired the way I was.

With the knowledge of hindsight, we see now that this moment in Peru was caught between a natural disaster and pandemic, between raging floods that threw the occasion into jeopardy years before the Pan American flame was relayed to the national stadium on opening night, and a virus that put an indefinite halt to the athletic livelihood not just of Peruvian athletes but of all athletes across the globe shortly after the Games culminated. It was a fledgling endeavor through and through, beset on all sides by nagging and predictable problems: corruption, negligence, incompetence, deceit. President Martin Vizcarra, who inaugurated the Pan-American Games at the opening ceremony and bestowed medals upon winners at the Games' closing, was impeached as I wrote my dissertation. Pablo Kuczynski, the Peruvian president who launched a broad media campaign in defense of the games during widespread flooding in South America, was impeached for corruption while I was in the field. And the president before him, Ollanta Humala, who inaugurated the newest offices in the National Stadium in December of 2015—right around the time the renovated *Villa Deportiva* was christened and preparations began for the 2019 Pan-American Games—was himself arrested on charges of corruption in July 2017, while I was working in at the training center in Cusco.



The political turmoil was surpassed only by the epidemiological chaos that engulfed the country only six months after the glee in Lima. The Sports Village constructed for the Games was itself transformed into a field hospital to tend to the sick (*La Republica* 2020), a macabre juxtaposition of health and death turned over in short order in the same space, where the nation's bodies at their athletic pinnacle made way for so many struggling just to breathe. The Elite Performance Centers were closed, resident athletes' lives and habits fractured and left in disarray. Perhaps precisely as some imagined, athletes migrated back to their home villages, away from the density of the urban hubs and back to the geographical openness that was the provenance of their talent. One might say the ground keeps crumbling beneath the feet of Peruvian runners. To what extent Peruvian sport and the training center in Cusco will ever recover is hard to predict. Many aspiring Quechua athletes, including some of my closest informants, have been condemned to feel their prime trickle out of them from day to day at home. The pain of training hardly compares to the agony of bearing quarantined potential, many athletes say. Anka is among them. "I cannot live without running" (*yo no puedo vivir sin correr*), he tells me from afar.

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 marked the United Nation's international year of Indigenous languages, and the organizing committee—led by the talent development company 'balich wonder shows'—wove Peru's linguistic diversity into the proceedings. Each of the 49 points corresponds to one of Peru's recognized languages, according to the IPD's official report (*Media Guide IPD 2019* p.19; see also *balichwondershow 2019*).

<sup>2</sup> "Porque hoy el mundo completo los mira, y America los admira."

<sup>3</sup> "Tierra de grandes culturas, de una historia milenaria."

<sup>4</sup> "Hoy 26 de julio declaro solemnemente inaugurados los décimo octavos juegos panamericanos lima 2019."

<sup>5</sup> For Mariategui, the "problem of the Indian" is to overcome exclusion from ownerships of the means of production, the land, by acquiring, among other things, the language of the oppressors: Spanish. The point reverberates in the writings of the Peruvian anthropologist and writer Jose Maria Arguedas for whom "Spanish has to be, without any doubt, the definitive language of the *mestizo*" (Arguedas, 1975; "*El castellano ha de ser, sin duda alguna, el idioma definitivo del mestizo*").

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